THE WORLD'S FAMOUS ORATIONS

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IN TEN VOLUMES

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GREAT BRITAIN—II

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VOL. IV

GREAT BRITAIN—II

1780—1801

PITT

I

THE WAR IN AMERICA DENOUNCED[1]

(1781)

Born in 1759, died in 1806; elected to Parliament in 1780; Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1782; Prime Minister in 1783–1801; secured the union of Ireland with Great Britain in 1800; Prime Minister again in 1804; formed the coalition with Russia and Austria against Napoléon, which was wrecked in 1815 at Austerlitz; Pitt's health being completely ruined, his death followed soon afterward.

GENTLEMEN have passed the highest eulogiums on the American war. Its justice has been defended in the most fervent manner. A noble lord, in the heat of his zeal, has called it a holy war. For my part, altho the honorable gentleman who made this motion, and some other gentlemen, have been, more than once, in the course of the debate, severely reprehended for calling it a wicked and accursed war, I am persuaded, and would affirm, that it was a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust and diabolical war!

It was conceived in injustice; it was nurtured and brought forth in folly; its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution and devastation—in truth, everything which went

[1] Spoken in the House of Commons in June, 1781, when he was twenty-two years old and had been only a few months in his seat. Abridged. The subject was Fox's motion for peace with the American Colonies. Pitt's maiden speech on February 26 of this year had evoked from Burke the remark, "He is not merely a chip of the old block, but the old block itself."

to constitute moral depravity and human turpitude was to be found in it. It was pregnant with misery of every kind.

The mischief, however, recoiled on the unhappy people of this country, who were made the instruments by which the wicked purposes of the authors of the war were effected. The nation was drained of its best blood, and of its vital resources of men and money. The expense of the war was enormous—much beyond any former experience.

And yet, what has the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats—victories celebrated only by a temporary triumph over our brethren, whom we would trample down and destroy; victories, which filled the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valued relatives, slain in the impious cause of enforcing unconditional submission, or with narratives of the glorious exertions of men struggling in the holy cause of liberty, tho struggling in the absence of all the facilities and advantages which are in general deemed the necessary concomitants of victory and success. Where was the Englishman, who on reading the narratives of those bloody and well-fought contests, could refrain from lamenting the loss of so much British blood spilt in such a cause, or from weeping, on whatever side victory might be declared?[1]

[1] Four months after the date of this speech Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

II

ON AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE HIS RESIGNATION[1]

(1784)

Can anything that I have said, Mr. Speaker, subject me to be branded with the imputation of preferring my personal situation to the public happiness? Sir, I have declared, again and again, only prove to me that there is any reasonable hope—show me but the most distant prospect that my resignation will at all contribute to restore peace and happiness to the country, and I will instantly resign. But, sir, I declare, at the same time, I will not be induced to resign as a preliminary to negotiation. I will not abandon this situation in order to throw myself upon the mercy of that right honorable gentleman. He calls me now a mere nominal minister, the mere puppet of secret influence. Sir, it is because I will not become a mere nominal minister of his creation—it is because I disdain to become the puppet of that right honorable gentleman—that I will not resign; neither shall his contemptuous expressions provoke me to resignation; my own honor and reputation I never will resign.

[1] In reply to Fox in 1784, when resolutions for the removal of the ministry had been passed, but the king had not complied with them. Abridged.

Let this House beware of suffering any individual to involve his own cause, and to interweave his own interests, in the resolutions of the House of Commons. The dignity of the House is for ever appealed to. Let us beware that it is not the dignity of any set of men. Let us beware that personal prejudices have no share in deciding these great constitutional questions. The right honorable gentleman is possessed of those enchanting arts whereby he can give grace to deformity. He holds before your eyes a beautiful and delusive image; he pushes it forward to your observation; but, as sure as you embrace it, the pleasing vision will vanish, and this fair phantom of liberty will be succeeded by anarchy, confusion, and ruin to the Constitution.

For, in truth, sir, if the constitutional independence of the Crown is thus reduced to the very verge of annihilation, where is the boasted equipoise of the Constitution? Dreadful, therefore, as the conflict is, my conscience, my duty, my fixed regard for the Constitution of our ancestors, maintain me still in this arduous situation. It is not any proud contempt, or defiance of the constitutional resolutions of this House—it is no personal point of honor, much less is it any lust of power, that makes me still cling to office. The situation of the times requires of me—and, I will add, the country calls aloud to me—that I should defend this castle; and I am determined, therefore, I *will* defend it!

III

ON THE REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH FRANCE[1]

(1800)

I WILL enlarge no further on the origin of the war. I have read and detailed to you a system which was in itself a declaration of war against all nations; which was so intended, and which has been so applied; which has been exemplified in the extreme peril and hazard of almost all who for a moment have trusted to treaty and which has not at this hour overwhelmed Europe in one indiscriminate mass of ruin, only because we have not indulged, to a fatal extremity, that disposition which we have, however, indulged too far—because we have not consented to trust to profession and compromise, rather than to our own valor and exertion, for security against a system from which we never shall be delivered till either the principle is extinguished or its strength is exhausted.

I might, sir, if I found it necessary, enter into much detail upon this part of the subject. You can not look at the map of Europe and lay your

[1] Spoken in the House of Commons, February 3, 1800. Abridged. Replied to by Fox on the same day. See, on subsequent pages, the speech of Fox. Napoleon had landed in France from Egypt on October 9 of the previous year. Having executed the coup d'état of the eighteenth Brumaire (November 9), he had been proclaimed first consul.

hand upon that country against which France has not either declared an open and aggressive war, or violated some positive treaty, or broken some recognized principle of the law of nations.

For the express purpose of producing the war they excited a popular tumult in Paris; they insisted upon and obtained the dismissal of M. Delessart. A new minister was appointed in his room; the tone of the negotiation was immediately changed, and an ultimatum was sent to the emperor, similar to that which was afterward sent to this country, affording him no satisfaction on his just grounds of complaint, and requiring him, under those circumstances, to disarm. The first events of the contest proved how much more France was prepared for war than Austria, and afford a strong confirmation of the proposition which I maintain, that no offensive intention was entertained on the part of the latter power.

War was then declared against Austria,[1] a war which I state to be a war of aggression on the part of France. The king of Prussia had declared that he should consider war against the emperor or empire as war against himself. He had declared that as a coestate of the empire he was determined to defend their rights; that as an ally to the emperor he would support him to the utmost against any attack; and that for the sake of his own dominions he felt himself

[1] On April 20, 1792.

called upon to resist the progress of French principles and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. With this notice before them, France declared war upon the emperor, and the war with Prussia was the necessary consequence of this aggression, both against the emperor and the empire.

It was not till a considerably later period that almost all the other nations of Europe found themselves equally involved in actual hostility; but it is not a little material to the whole of my argument, compared with the statement of the learned gentleman and with that contained in the French note, to examine at what period this hostility extended itself. It extended itself, in the course of 1796, to the states of Italy which had hitherto been exempted from it. In 1797 it had ended in the destruction of most of them; it had ended in the virtual deposition of the king of Sardinia; it had ended in the conversion of Genoa and Tuscany into democratic republics; it had ended in the revolution of Venice, in the violation of treaties with the new Venetian republic; and finally, in transferring that very republic, the creature and vassal of France, to the dominion of Austria.

I observe from the gestures of some honorable gentlemen that they think we are precluded from the use of any argument founded on this last transaction. I already hear them saying that it was as criminal in Austria to receive as it was in France to give. I am far from defending

or palliating the conduct of Austria upon this occasion. But because Austria, unable at last to contend with the arms of France, was forced to accept an unjust and insufficient indemnification for the conquests France had made from it, are we to be debarred from stating what, on the part of France, was not merely an unjust acquisition, but an act of the grossest and most aggravated perfidy and cruelty, and one of the most striking specimens of that system which has been uniformly and indiscriminately applied to all the countries which France has had within its grasp?

Let us look at the conduct of France. She had spurned the offers of Great Britain; she had reduced her Continental enemies to the necessity of accepting a precarious peace; she had (in spite of those pledges repeatedly made and uniformly violated) surrounded herself by new conquests on every part of her frontier but one. That one was Switzerland. The first effect of being relieved from the war with Austria, of being secured against all fears of Continental invasion on the ancient territory of France, was their unprovoked attack against this unoffending and devoted country.

The country they attacked was one which had long been the faithful ally of France; which, instead of giving cause of jealousy to any other power, had been for ages proverbial for the simplicity and innocence of its manners, and which had acquired and preserved the esteem

of all the nations of Europe; which had almost, by the common consent of mankind, been exempted from the sound of war, and marked out as a land of Goshen, safe and untouched in the midst of surrounding calamities.

Look, then, at the fate of Switzerland, at the circumstances which led to its destruction. Add this instance to the catalog of aggression against all Europe, and then tell me whether the system I have described has not been prosecuted with an unrelenting spirit which can not be subdued in adversity, which can not be appeased in prosperity, which neither solemn professions, nor the general law of nations, nor the obligation of treaties (whether previous to the revolution or subsequent to it) could restrain from the subversion of every state into which, either by force or fraud, their arms could penetrate.

Then tell me, whether the disasters of Europe are to be charged upon the provocation of this country and its allies, or on the inherent principle of the French Revolution, of which the natural result produced so much misery and carnage in France and carried desolation and terror over so large a portion of the world.

After this, it remains only shortly to remind gentlemen of the aggression against Egypt, not omitting, however, to notice the capture of Malta in the way to Egypt. Inconsiderable as that island may be thought, compared with the scenes we have witnessed, let it be remembered that it is an island of which the government

had long been recognized by every state of Europe, against which France pretended no cause of war, and whose independence was as dear to itself and as sacred as that of any country in Europe. It was in fact not unimportant, from its local situation to the other powers of Europe; but in proportion as any man may diminish its importance the instance will only serve the more to illustrate and confirm the proposition which I have maintained.

The all-searching eye of the French Revolution looks to every part of Europe and every quarter of the world in which can be found an object either of acquisition or plunder. Nothing is too great for the temerity of its ambition, nothing too small or insignificant for the grasp of its rapacity. From hence Bonaparte and his army proceeded to Egypt.

The attack was made; pretenses were held out to the natives of that country in the name of the French king whom they had murdered. They pretended to have the approbation of the grand seignior whose territory they were violating; their project was carried on under the profession of a zeal for Mohammedanism; it was carried on by proclaiming that France had been reconciled to the Mussulman faith, had abjured that of Christianity, or, as he in his impious language termed it, of the sect of the Messiah.

The only plea which they have since held out to color this atrocious invasion of a neutral and friendly territory is that it was the road

to attack the English power in India. It is most unquestionably true that this was one and a principal cause of this unparalleled outrage; but another and an equally substantial cause (as appears by their own statements) was the division and partition of the territories of what they thought a falling power. It is impossible to dismiss this subject without observing that this attack against Egypt was accompanied by an attack upon British possessions in India, made on true revolutionary principles. In Europe the propagation of the principles of France had uniformly prepared the way for the progress of its arms.

What, then, was the nature of this system? Was it anything but what I have stated it to be—an insatiable love of aggrandizement, an implacable spirit of destruction against all the civil and religious institutions of every country? This is the first moving and acting spirit of the French Revolution; this is the spirit which animated it at its birth, and this is the spirit which will not desert it till the moment of its dissolution, "which grew with its growth, which strengthened with its strength," but which has not abated under its misfortunes nor declined in its decay. It has been invariably the same in every period, operating more or less, according as accident or circumstances might assist it; but it has been inherent in the Revolution in all stages; it has equally belonged to Brissot, to Robespierre, to Tallien, to Reubel, to Barras, and

to every one of the leaders of the Directory, but to none more than to Bonaparte, in whom now all their powers are united.

Its first fundamental principle was to bribe the poor against the rich, by proposing to transfer into new hands, on the delusive notion of equality, and in breach of every principle of justice, the whole property of the country. The practical application of this principle was to devote the whole of that property to indiscriminate plunder, and to make it the foundation of a revolutionary system of finance, productive in proportion to the misery and desolation which it created.

It has been accompanied by an unwearied spirit of proselytism, diffusing itself over all the nations of the earth: a spirit which can apply itself to all circumstances and all situations, which can furnish a list of grievances and hold out a promise of redress equally to all nations; which inspired the teachers of French liberty with the hope of alike recommending themselves to those who live under the feudal code of the German Empire; to the various States of Italy, under all their different institutions; to the old republicans of Holland, and to the new republicans of America; to the Catholic of Ireland, whom it was to deliver from Protestant usurpation; the Protestant of Switzerland, whom it was to deliver from popish superstition; and to the Mussulman of Egypt, whom it was to deliver from Christian persecution; to the re-

mote Indian, blindly bigoted to his ancient institutions; and to the natives of Great Britain, enjoying the perfection of practical freedom, and justly attached to their Constitution, from the joint result of habit, of reason, and of experience.

The last and distinguishing feature is a perfidy which nothing can bind, which no tie of treaty, no sense of the principles generally received among nations, no obligation, human or divine, can restrain. Thus qualified, thus armed for destruction, the genius of the French Revolution marched forth, the terror and dismay of the world. Every nation has in its turn been the witness, many have been the victims of its principles; and it is left for us to decide whether we will compromise with such a danger while we have yet resources to supply the sinews of war, while the heart and spirit of the country is yet unbroken, and while we have the means of calling forth and supporting a powerful cooperation in Europe.

In examining this part of the subject let it be remembered that there is one other characteristic of the French Revolution as striking as its dreadful and destructive principles: I mean the instability of its government, which has been of itself sufficient to destroy all reliance, if any such reliance could at any time have been placed on the good faith of any of its rulers. Such has been the incredible rapidity with which the revolutions in France have succeeded each other, that I believe the names of those who have suc-

cessively exercised absolute power under the pretense of liberty are to be numbered by the years of the revolution, and by each of the new constitutions, which, under the same pretense, has in its turn been imposed by force on France: all of which alike were founded upon principles which professed to be among all the nations of the earth. Each of these will be found, upon an average, to have had about two years as the period of its duration.

Having taken a view of what it was, let us now examine what it is. In the first place we see, as has been truly stated, a change in the description and form of the sovereign authority. A supreme power is placed at the head of this nominal republic, with a more open avowal of military despotism than at any former period; with a more open and undisguised abandonment of the names and pretenses under which that despotism long attempted to conceal itself. The different institutions, republican in their form and appearance, which were before the instruments of that despotism, are now annihilated; they have given way to the absolute power of one man, concentrating in himself all the authority of the State, and differing from other monarchs only in this, that (as my honorable friend, Mr. Canning, truly stated it) he wields a sword instead of a scepter.[1] What,

[1] Since becoming first consul, Napoleon had rapidly advanced in power and influence with the French people. He soon went to Italy again, and on June 14 of this year won the Battle of Marengo.

then, is the confidence we are to derive either from the frame of the government or from the character and past conduct of the person who is now the absolute ruler of France?

Had we seen a man of whom we had no previous knowledge suddenly invested with the sovereign authority of the country; invested with the power of taxation, with the power of the sword, the power of war and peace, the unlimited power of commanding the resources, of disposing of the lives and fortunes of every man in France; if we had seen at the same moment all the inferior machinery of the revolution, which, under the variety of successive shocks had kept the system in motion. still remaining entire, all that, by requisition and plunder, had given activity to the revolutionary system of finance, and had furnished the means of creating an army, by converting every man who was of age to bear arms into a soldier, not for the defense of his own country, but for the sake of carrying the war into the country of the enemy; if we had seen all the subordinate instruments of Jacobin power subsisting in their full force, and retaining (to use the French phrase) all their original organization, and had then observed this single change in the conduct of their affairs that there was now one man, with no rival to thwart his measures, no colleag to divide his powers, no council to control his operations, no liberty of speaking or writing, no expression of public opinion to check or in-

fluence his conduct; under such circumstances should we be wrong to pause, or wait for the evidence of facts and experience, before we consented to trust our safety to the forbearance of a single man, in such a situation, and to relinquish those means of defense which have hitherto carried us safe through all the storms of the Revolution? if we were to ask what are the principles and character of this stranger to whom fortune has suddenly committed the concerns of a great and powerful nation?

But is this the actual state of the present question? Are we talking of a stranger of whom we have heard nothing? No, sir, we have heard of him; we, and Europe, and the world, have heard both of him and of the satellites by whom he is surrounded, and it is impossible to discuss fairly the propriety of any answer which could be returned to his overtures of negotiation without taking into consideration the inferences to be drawn from his personal character and conduct.

If we carry our views out of France and look at the dreadful catalog of all the breaches of treaty, and which are precisely commensurate with the number of treaties which the republic has made (for I have sought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken), if we trace the history of them all from the beginning of the Revolution to the present time, or if we select those which have been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty

and marked the most strongly with the characteristic features of the Revolution, the name of Bonaparte will be found allied to more of them than that of any other that can be handed down in the history of the crimes and miseries of the last ten years.

It is unnecessary to say more with respect to the credit due to his professions or the reliance to be placed on his general character. But it will perhaps be argued that whatever may be his character or whatever has been his past conduct, he has now an interest in making and observing peace. That he has an interest in making peace is at best but a doubtful proposition, and that he has an interest in preserving it is still more uncertain. That it is his interest to negotiate I do not indeed deny. It is his interest, above all, to engage this country in separate negotiation in order to loosen and dissolve the whole system of the confederacy on the Continent, to palsy at once the arms of Russia, or of Austria, or of any other country that might look to you for support; and then either to break off his separate treaty, or, if he should have concluded it, to apply the lesson which is taught in his school of policy in Egypt, and to revive at his pleasure those claims of indemnification which may have been reserved to some happier period.

This is precisely the interest which he has in negotiation. But on what grounds are we to be convinced that he has an interest in concluding and observing a solid and permanent pacifica-

tion? Under all the circumstances of his personal character, and his newly acquired power, what other security has he for retaining that power but the sword? His hold upon France is the sword, and he has no other. Is he connected with the soil, or with the habits, the affections, or the prejudices of the country? He is a stranger, a foreigner, and a usurper. He unites in his own person everything that a pure republican must detest; everything that an enraged Jacobin has abjured; everything that a sincere and faithful royalist must feel as an insult. If he is opposed at any time in his career, what is his appeal? He appeals to his fortune—in other words, to his army and his sword. Placing, then, his whole reliance upon military support, can he afford to let his military renown pass away, to let his laurels wither, to let the memory of his trophies sink in obscurity? Is it certain that, with his army confined within France and restrained from inroads upon her neighbors, he can maintain at his devotion a force sufficiently numerous to support his power? Having no object but the possession of absolute dominion, no passion but military glory, is it to be reckoned as certain that he can feel such an interest in permanent peace as would justify us in laying down our arms, reducing our expense, and relinquishing our means of security, on the faith of his engagements?

Do we believe that, after the conclusion of peace, he would not still sigh over the lost tro-

phies of Egypt, wrested from him by the celebrated victory of Aboukir[1] and the brilliant exertions of that heroic band of British seamen whose influence and example rendered the Turkish troops invincible at Acre?[2] Can he forget that the effect of these exploits enabled Austria and Russia in one campaign to recover from France all which she had acquired by his victories, to dissolve the charm which for a time fascinated Europe, and to show that their generals, contending in a just cause, could efface even by their success and their military glory the most dazzling triumphs of his victorious and desolating ambition?

Can we believe, with these impressions on his mind, that if, after a year, eighteen months, or two years of peace had elapsed, he should be tempted by the appearance of fresh insurrection in Ireland, encouraged by renewed and unrestrained communication with France, and fomented by the fresh infusion of Jacobin principles; if we were at such a moment without a fleet to watch the ports of France or to guard the coasts of Ireland, without a disposable army or an embodied militia capable of supplying a speedy and adequate reinforcement, and that he had suddenly the means of transporting

[1] Better known as the Battle of the Nile, won by Nelson on August 1 and 2, 1798.

[2] Napoleon's failure to reduce Acre, as defended by Sir Sidney Smith in 1799, caused him to abandon his ambitious plans for further conquests in Asia.

thither a body of twenty or thirty thousand French troops; can we believe that at such a moment his ambition and vindictive spirit would be restrained by the recollection of engagements or the obligation of treaty? Or if, in some new crisis of difficulty and danger to the Ottoman empire, with no British navy in the Mediterranean, no confederacy formed, no force collected to support it, an opportunity should present itself for resuming the abandoned expedition to Egypt, for renewing the avowed and favorite project of conquering and colonizing that rich and fertile country, and of opening the way to wound some of the vital interests of England and to plunder the treasures of the East in order to fill the bankrupt coffers of France? Would it be the interest of Bonaparte under such circumstances, or his principles, his moderation, his love of peace, his aversion to conquest, and his regard for the independence of other nations—would it be all or any of these that would secure us against an attempt which would leave us only the option of submitting without a struggle to certain loss and disgrace, or of renewing the contest which we had prematurely terminated, without allies, without preparation, with diminished means, and with increased difficulty and hazard?

Hitherto I have spoken only of the reliance which we can place on the professions, the character, and the conduct of the present first consul; but it remains to consider the stability

of his power. The revolution has been marked throughout by a rapid succession of new depositaries of public authority, each supplanting its predecessor. What grounds have we to believe that this new usurpation, more odious and more undisguised than all that preceded it, will be more durable? Is it that we rely on the particular provisions contained in the code of the pretended constitution, which was proclaimed as accepted by the French people as soon as the garrison of Paris declared their determination to exterminate all its enemies, and before any of its articles could be known to half the country whose consent was required for its establishment?

I will not pretend to inquire deeply into the nature and effects of a constitution which can hardly be regarded but as a farce and a mockery. If, however, it could be supposed that its provisions were to have any effect, it seems equally adapted to two purposes—that of giving to its founder for a time an absolute and uncontrolled authority, and that of laying the certain foundation of disunion and discord which, if they once prevail, must render the exercise of all the authority under the constitution impossible and leave no appeal but to the sword.

Is, then, military despotism that which we are accustomed to consider as a stable form of government? In all ages of the world it has been attained with the least stability to the persons who exercised it, and with the most rapid suc-

cession of changes and revolutions. In the outset of the French Revolution its advocates boasted that it furnished a security for ever, not to France only, but to all countries in the world, against military despotism; that the force of standing armies was vain and delusive; that no artificial power could resist public opinion; and that it was upon the foundation of public opinion alone that any government could stand. I believe that in this instance, as in every other, the progress of the French Revolution has belied its professions; but, so far from its being a proof of the prevalence of public opinion against military force, it is, instead of the proof, the strongest exception from that doctrine which appears in the history of the world.

If, then, I am asked how long are we to persevere in the war, I can only say that no period can be accurately assigned. Considering the importance of obtaining complete security for the objects for which we contend, we ought not to be discouraged too soon; but, on the contrary considering the importance of not impairing and exhausting the radical strength of the country, there are limits beyond which we ought not to persist, and which we can determine only by estimating and comparing fairly from time to time the degree of security to be obtained by treaty, and the risk and disadvantage of continuing the contest.

But, sir, there are some gentlemen in the House who seem to consider it already certain

that the ultimate success to which I am looking is unattainable. They suppose us contending only for the restoration of the French monarchy, which they believe to be impracticable, and deny to be desirable for this country. We have been asked in the course of this debate: Do you think you can impose monarchy upon France against the will of the nation? I never thought it, I never hoped it, I never wished it. I have thought, I have hoped, I have wished, that the time might come when the effect of the arms of the allies might so far overpower the military force which keeps France in bondage as to give vent and scope to the thoughts and actions of its inhabitants.

On the question, sir, how far the restoration of the French monarchy, if practicable, is desirable, I shall not think it necessary to say much. Can it be supposed to be indifferent to us or to the world whether the throne of France is to be filled by a prince of the house of Bourbon or by him whose principles and conduct I have endeavored to develop? Is it nothing, with a view to influence and example, whether the fortune of this last adventurer in the lottery of revolutions shall appear to be permanent? Is it nothing whether a system shall be sanctioned which confirms, by one of its fundamental articles, that general transfer of property from its ancient and lawful possessors, which holds out one of the most terrible examples of national injustice, and which has furnished the great

source of revolutionary finance and revolutionary strength against all the powers of Europe?

In the exhausted and impoverished state of France it seems for a time impossible that any system but that of robbery and confiscation, anything but the continued torture which can be applied only by the engines of the revolution, can extort from its ruined inhabitants more than the means of supporting in peace the yearly expenditure of its government. Suppose, then, the heir of the house of Bourbon reinstated on the throne; he will have sufficient occupation in endeavoring, if possible, to heal the wounds and gradually to repair the losses of ten years of civil convulsion—to reanimate the drooping commerce, to rekindle the industry, to replace the capital, and to revive the manufactures of the country.

Under such circumstances there must probably be a considerable interval before such a monarch, whatever may be his views, can possess the power which can make him formidable to Europe; but while the system of the Revolution continues the case is quite different. It is true indeed that even the gigantic and unnatural means by which that Revolution has been supported are so far impaired, the influence of its principles and the terror of its arms so far weakened, and its power of action so much contracted and circumscribed, that against the embodied force of Europe, prosecuting a vigorous war, we may justly hope that the remnant and

wreck of this system can not long oppose an effectual resistance.

Can we forget that in the ten years in which that power has subsisted it has brought more misery on surrounding nations and produced more acts of aggression, cruelty, perfidy, and enormous ambition than can be traced in the history of France for the centuries which have elapsed since the foundation of its monarchy, including all the wars which in the course of that period have been waged by any of those sovereigns whose projects of aggrandizement and violations of treaty afford a constant theme of general reproach against the ancient government of France? And if not, can we hesitate whether we have the best prospect of permanent peace, the best security for the independence and safety of Europe, from the restoration of the lawful government or from the continuance of revolutionary power in the hands of Bonaparte?

In compromise and treaty with such a power, placed in such hands as now exercise it, and retaining the same means of annoyance which it now possesses, I see little hope of permanent security. I see no possibility at this moment of such a peace as would justify that liberal intercourse which is the essence of real amity; no chance of terminating the expenses or the anxieties of war, or of restoring to us any of the advantages of established tranquillity; and, as a sincere lover of peace, I can not be content

with its nominal attainment. I must be desirous of pursuing that system which promises to attain in the end the permanent enjoyment of its solid and substantial blessings for this country and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace I will not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow when the reality is not substantially within my reach.

FOX

I

ON THE BRITISH DEFEAT IN AMERICA[1]

(1780)

Born in 1749, died in 1806; son of Lord Holland; entered Parliament as a Tory in 1768; in Lord North's ministry in 1770-1774, from which he was dismissed, and then became a Whig, supporting the American cause; Foreign Secretary in 1782, and again in 1783 and 1806.

We are charged with expressing joy at the triumphs of America. True it is that, in a former session, I proclaimed it as my sincere opinion, that if the ministry had succeeded in their first scheme on the liberties of America, the liberties of this country would have been at an end. Thinking this, as I did, in the sincerity of an honest heart, I rejoiced at the resistance which the ministry had met to their attempt. That great and glorious statesman, the late Earl of Chatham, feeling for the liberties of his native country, thanked God that America had resisted. But, it seems, "all the calamities of the country are to be ascribed to the wishes, and the joy, and the speeches of Opposition." O miserable and unfortunate ministry! O blind and incapable men! whose measures are

[1] Delivered in the House of Commons in 1780. The surrender of Cornwallis occurred on October 19 of the following year. Abridged.

framed with so little foresight, and executed with so little firmness, that they not only crumble to pieces, but bring on the ruin of their country, merely because one rash, weak, or wicked man, in the House of Commons, makes a speech against them!

But who is he who arraigns gentlemen on this side of the House with causing, by their inflammatory speeches, the misfortunes of their country? The accusation comes from one whose inflammatory harangs have led the nation, step by step, from violence to violence, in that inhuman, unfeeling system of blood and massacre, which every honest man must detest, which every good man must abhor, and every wise man condemn! And this man imputes the guilt of such measures to those who had all along foretold the consequences; who had prayed, entreated and supplicated, not only for America, but for the credit of the nation and its eventual welfare, to arrest the hand of power, meditating slaughter, and directed by injustice!

What was the consequence of the sanguinary measures recommended in those bloody, inflammatory speeches? Tho Boston was to be starved, tho Hancock and Adams were proscribed, yet at the feet of these very men the Parliament of Great Britain was obliged to kneel, flatter, and cringe; and, as it had the cruelty at one time to denounce vengeance against these men, so it had the meanness afterward to implore their forgiveness. Shall he who called the Americans

"Hancock and his crew,"—shall he presume to reprehend any set of men for inflammatory speeches? It is this accursed American war that has led us, step by step, into all our present misfortunes and national disgraces. What was the cause of our wasting forty millions of money, and sixty thousand lives? The American war! What was it that produced the French rescript and a French war? The American war! What was it that produced the Spanish manifesto and Spanish war? The American war! What was it that armed forty-two thousand men in Ireland with the arguments carried on the points of forty thousand bayonets? The American war! For what are we about to incur an additional debt of twelve or fourteen millions? This accursed, cruel, diabolical American war!

II

THE TYRANNY OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY[1]

(1783)

The honorable gentleman charges me with abandoning that cause, which, he says, in terms of flattery, I had once so successfully asserted. I tell him in reply, that if he were to search the history of my life, he would find that the period of it in which I struggled most for the real, substantial cause of liberty is this very moment I am addressing you. Freedom, according to my conception of it, consists in the safe and sacred possession of a man's property, governed by laws defined and certain; with many personal privileges, natural, civil, and religious, which he can not surrender without ruin to himself, and of which to be deprived by any other power is despotism. This bill, instead of subverting, is destined to give stability to these principles; instead of narrowing the basis of freedom, it tends to enlarge it; instead of suppressing, its object is to infuse and circulate the spirit of liberty.

What is the most odious species of tyranny?

[1] Part of a speech in the House of Commons in November, 1783, in support of his own bill for reforming the Government in India and anticipating the prosecution of Warren Hastings by nearly five years. For passages from the speeches of Burke and Sheridan, at the trial of Hastings, see volume six, Ireland.

Precisely that which this bill is meant to annihilate: that a handful of men, free themselves, should execute the most base and abominable despotism over millions of their fellow creatures; that innocence should be the victim of oppression; that industry should toil for rapine; that the harmless laborer should sweat, not for his own benefit, but for the luxury and rapacity of tyrannic depredation; in a word that thirty millions of men, gifted by Providence with the ordinary endowments of humanity, should groan under a system of despotism unmatched in all the histories of the world.

What is the end of all government? Certainly the happiness of the governed. Others may hold other opinions, but this is mine, and I proclaim it. What are we to think of a government whose good fortune is supposed to spring from the calamities of its subjects, whose aggrandizement grows out of the miseries of mankind? This is the kind of government exercised under the East India Company upon the natives of Hindustan; and the subversion of that infamous government is the main object of the bill in question. But in the progress of accomplishing this end, it is objected that the charter cf the company should not be violated; and upon this point, sir, I shall deliver my opinion without disguise. A charter is a trust to one or more persons for some given benefit. If this trust be abused, if the benefit be not obtained, and its failure arise from palpable guilt, or (what in

this case is fully as bad) from palpable ignorance or mismanagement, will any man gravely say that that trust should not be resumed and delivered to other hands; more especially in the case of the East India Company, whose manner of executing this trust, whose laxity and languor have produced, and tend to produce consequences diametrically opposite to the ends of confiding that trust, and of the institution for which it was granted?

I beg of gentlemen to beware of the lengths to which their arguments upon the intangibility of this charter may be carried. Every syllable virtually impeaches the establishment by which we sit in the House, in the enjoyment of this freedom and of every other blessing of our government. These kinds of arguments are batteries against the main pillar of the British Constitution. Some men are consistent of their own private opinions, and discover the inheritance of family maxims, when they question the principles of the Revolution; but I have no scruple in subscribing to the articles of that creed which produced it. Sovereigns are sacred, and reverence is due to every king; yet, with all my attachments to the person of a first magistrate, had I lived in the reign of James II., I should most certainly have contributed my efforts, and borne part in those illustrious struggles which vindicated an empire from hereditary servitude, and recorded this valuable doctrine, "that trust abused is revocable."

III

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF WASHINGTON[1]

(1794)

How infinitely superior must appear the spirit and principles of General Washington in his late address to Congress[2] compared with the policy of modern European courts! Illustrious man! deriving honor less from the splendor of his situation than from the dignity of his mind. Grateful to France for the assistance received from her in that great contest which secured the independence of America, he yet did not choose to give up the system of neutrality in her favor; having once laid down the line of conduct most proper to be pursued, not all the insults and provocations of the French minister, Genet, could at all put him out of his way and bend him from his purpose.

It must, indeed, create astonishment, that, placed in circumstances so critical, and filling a station so conspicuous, the character of Washington should never once have been called in question—that he should, in no one instance, have been accused either of improper insolence, or of mean submission, in his transactions with foreign

[1] From a speech delivered in 1794.

[2] A reference to the attitude of neutrality taken toward the French Republic.

nations. It has been reserved for him to run the race of glory without experiencing the smallest interruption to the brilliancy of his career. The breath of censure has not dared to impeach the purity of his conduct, nor the eye of envy to raise its malignant glance to the elevation of his virtues. Such has been the transcendent merit and the unparalleled fate of this illustrious man!

How did he act when insulted by Genet?[1] Did he consider it as necessary to avenge himself for the misconduct or madness of an individual, by involving a whole continent in the horrors of war? No; he contented himself with procuring satisfaction for the insult, by causing Genet to be recalled, and thus at once consulted his own dignity and the interests of his country. Happy Americans! While the whirlwind flies over one quarter of the globe, and spreads everywhere desolation, you remain protected from its baneful effects by your own virtues, and the wisdom of your government.

Separated from Europe by an immense ocean, you feel not the effect of those prejudices and passions which convert the boasted seats of civilization into scenes of horror and bloodshed. You profit by the folly and madness of the contending

[1] Edmund Charles Genet, the French minister to the United States, who had treated with defiance and insolence the American declaration of neutrality. He was a brother of Madame Campon. Being recalled as minister, Genet, who was a Girondist, married a daughter of Gov. George Clinton, of New York. Having settled in New York, he died at Schodack, on the Hudson, in 1834.

nations, and afford, in your more congenial clime, an asylum to those blessings and virtues which they wantonly contemn, or wickedly exclude from their bosom! Cultivating the arts of peace under the influence of freedom, you advance, by rapid strides, to opulence and distinction; and if, by any accident, you should be compelled to take part in the present unhappy contest—if you should find it necessary to avenge insult, or repel injury—the world will bear witness to the equity of your sentiments and the moderation of your views; and the success of your arms will, no doubt, be proportioned to the justice of your cause!

IV

ON THE REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH FRANCE[1]

(1800)

At so late an hour of the night, I am sure you will do me the justice to believe that I do not mean to go at length into the discussion of this great question. Exhausted as the attention of the House must be, and unaccustomed

[1] Delivered in the House of Commons, February 3, 1800. A reply to Pitt's speech of the same day printed on a previous page. For more than five years Fox had now been seldom seen in his seat, but, indignant at the reply already made to the first consul's overtures of peace, and in deference to the wishes of his friends, he came forward to make this speech. Abridged.

as I have been of late to attend in my place, nothing but a deep sense of my duty could have induced me to trouble you at all, and particularly to request your indulgence at such an hour.

Sir, my honorable and learned friend [Mr. Erskine] has truly said, that the present is a new era in the war, and the right honorable gentleman opposite to me [Mr. Pitt] feels the justice of the remark; for, by traveling back to the commencement of the war, and referring again to all the topics and arguments which he has so often and so successfully urged upon the House, and by which he has drawn them on to the support of his measures, he is forced to acknowledge that, at the end of a seven years' conflict, we are come but to a new era in the war, at which he thinks it necessary only to press all his former arguments to induce us to persevere. All the topics which have so often misled us—all the reasoning which has so invariably failed—all the lofty predictions which have so constantly been falsified by events—all the hopes which have amused the sanguine, and all the assurances of the distress and weakness of the enemy which have satisfied the unthinking, are again enumerated and advanced as arguments for our continuing the war. What! at the end of seven years of the most burdensome and the most calamitous struggle in which this country ever was engaged, are we again to be amused with notions of finance, and calcula-

tions of the exhausted resources of the enemy, as a ground of confidence and of hope?

Gracious God! were we not told five years ago that France was not only on the brink and in the jaws of ruin, but that she was actually sunk into the gulf of bankruptcy? Were we not told, as an unanswerable argument against treating, "that she could not hold out another campaign—that nothing but peace could save her—that she wanted only time to recruit her exhausted finances—that to grant her repose was to grant her the means of again molesting this country, and that we had nothing to do but persevere for a short time, in order to save ourselves forever from the consequences of her ambition and her Jacobinism?" What! after having gone on from year to year upon assurances like these, and after having seen the repeated refutations of every prediction, are we again to be gravely and seriously assured, that we have the same prospect of success on the *same identical grounds?* And, without any other argument or security, are we invited, at this new era of the war, to conduct it upon principles which, if adopted and acted upon, may make it eternal? If the right honorable gentleman shall succeed in prevailing on Parliament and the country to adopt the principles which he has advanced this night, I see no possible termination to the contest. No man can see an end to it; and upon the assurances and predictions which have so uniformly failed, we

are called upon not merely to refuse all negotiations, but to countenance principles and views as distant from wisdom and justice, as they are in their nature wild and impracticable.

I must lament that the right honorable gentleman [Mr. Pitt] has thought proper to go at such length, and with such severity of minute investigation, into all the early circumstances of the war, which (whatever they were) are nothing to the present purpose, and ought not to influence the present feelings of the House. I certainly shall not follow him through the whole of this tedious detail, tho I do not agree with him in many of his assertions. I do not know what impression his narrative may make on other gentlemen; but I will tell him fairly and candidly, he has not convinced me. I continue to think, and until I see better grounds for changing my opinion than any that the right honorable gentleman has this night produced, I shall continue to think, and to say, plainly and explicitly, "that this country was the aggressor in the war." But with regard to Austria and Prussia—is there a man who, for one moment, can dispute that they were the aggressors? It will be vain for the right honorable gentleman to enter into long and plausible reasoning against the evidence of documents so clear, so decisive—so frequently, so thoroughly investigated. The unfortunate monarch, Louis XVI., himself, as well as those who were in his confidence, has

borne decisive testimony to the fact, that between him and the emperor [Leopold of Austria] there were an intimate correspondence and a perfect understanding. Do I mean by this that a positive treaty was entered into for the dismemberment of France? Certainly not. But no man can read the declarations which were made at Mantua as well as at Pilnitz, as they are given by M. Bertrand de Molville, without acknowledging that this was not merely an intention, but a *declaration* of an intention, on the part of the great powers of Germany, to interfere in the internal affairs of France, for the purpose of regulating the government against the opinion of the people. This, tho not a plan for the partition of France, was, in the eye of reason and common sense, an aggression against France.

Let us suppose the case to be that of Great Britain. Will any gentleman say that if two of the great powers should make a public declaration that they were determined to make an attack on this kingdom as soon as circumstances should favor their intention; that they only waited for this occasion, and that in the meantime they would keep their forces ready for the purpose, it would not be considered by the Parliament and people of this country as a hostile aggression? And is there any Englishman in existence who is such a friend to peace as to say that the nation could retain its honor and

dignity if it should sit down under such a menace? I know too well what is due to the national character of England to believe that there would be two opinions on the case, if thus put home to our own feelings and understandings. We must, then, respect in others the indignation which such an act would excite in ourselves; and when we see it established on the most indisputable testimony, that both at Pilnitz and at Mantua declarations were made to this effect, it is idle to say that, as far as the emperor and the king of Prussia were concerned, they were not the aggressors in the war.

I really, sir, can not think it necessary to follow the right honorable gentleman into all the minute details which he has thought proper to give us respecting the first aggression; but that Austria and Prussia were the aggressors, not a man in any country, who has ever given himself the trouble to think at all on the subject, can doubt. Nothing could be more hostile than their whole proceedings. Did they not declare to France that it was her internal concerns, not her external proceedings, which provoked them to confederate against her? Look back to the proclamations with which they set out. Read the declarations which they made themselves to justify their appeal to arms. They did not pretend to fear her ambition—her conquests—her troubling her neighbors; but they accused her of new-modeling her own government. They said nothing of her aggressions

abroad. They spoke only of her clubs and societies at Paris.

Sir, in all this, I am not justifying the French; I am not trying to absolve them from blame, either in their internal or external policy. I think, on the contrary, that their successive rulers have been as bad and as execrable, in various instances, as any of the most despotic and unprincipled governments that the world ever saw. I think it impossible, sir, that it should have been otherwise. It was not to be expected that the French, when once engaged in foreign wars, should not endeavor to spread destruction around them, and to form plans of aggrandizement and plunder on every side. Men bred in the school of the house of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of the race. They have imitated the practise of their great prototype, and, through their whole career of mischiefs and of crimes, have done no more than servilely trace the steps of their own Louis XIV. If they have overrun countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles; if they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner; if they have even fraternized with the people of foreign countries, and pretended to make their cause their own, they have only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. They

have constantly had Louis, the Grand Monarch, in their eye.

But it may be said that this example was long ago, and that we ought not to refer to a period so distant. True, it is a remote period applied to the man, but not so of the principle. The principle was never extinct; nor has its operation been suspended in France, except, perhaps, for a short interval, during the administration of Cardinal Fleury[1]; and my complaint against the Republic of France is, not that she has generated new crimes—not that she has promulgated new mischief—but that she has adopted and acted upon the principles which have been so fatal to Europe under the practise of the House of Bourbon. It is said, that wherever the French have gone they have introduced revolution—they have sought for the means of disturbing neighboring states, and have not been content with mere conquest. What is this but adopting the ingenious scheme of Louis XIV? He was not content with merely overrunning a state. Whenever he came into a new territory, he established what he called his chamber of claims, a most convenient device, by which he inquired whether the conquered country or province had any dormant or disputed claims—any cause of complaint—any unsettled demand upon any other state or province—upon which he might wage war upon such state, thereby

[1] Prime minister from 1726 to 1743.

discover again ground for new devastation, and gratify his ambition by new acquisitions. What have the republicans done more atrocious, more Jacobinical than this? Louis went to war with Holland. His pretext was, that Holland had not treated him with sufficient *respect*. A very just and proper cause for war, indeed!

Surely sir, if we must be thus rigid in scrutinizing the conduct of an enemy, we ought to be equally careful in not committing ourselves, our honor, and our safety, with an ally who has manifested the same want of respect for the rights of other nations. Surely, if it is material to know the character of a power with whom you are about only to treat for peace, it is more material to know the character of allies with whom you are about to enter into the closest connection of friendship, and for whose exertions you are about to pay. Now, sir, what was the conduct of your own allies to Poland? Is there a single atrocity of the French, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Egypt, if you please, more unprincipled and inhuman than that of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in Poland?[1] What has there been in the conduct of the French to foreign powers; what in the violation of solemn treaties; what in the plunder, devastation, and dismemberment of unoffending countries; what in the horrors and murders perpetrated upon the subdued victims of their rage in any district

[1] The three partitions of Poland occurred in 1772, 1783, and 1795.

which they have overrun, worse than the conduct of those three great powers in the miserable, devoted, and trampled-on Kingdom of Poland, and who have been, or are, our allies in this war for religion and social order, and the rights of nations?

"Oh, but you regretted the partition of Poland!" Yes, regretted! you regretted the violence, and that is all you did. You united yourselves with the actors; you, in fact, by your acquiescence, confirmed the atrocity. But they are your allies; and tho they overran and divided Poland, there was nothing, perhaps, in the manner of doing it which stamped it with peculiar infamy and disgrace. The hero of Poland [Suvarof[1]], perhaps, was merciful and mild! He was "as much superior to Bonaparte in bravery, and in the discipline which he maintained, as he was superior in virtue and humanity!" He was animated by the purest principles of Christianity, and was restrained in his career by the benevolent precepts which it inculcates. Was he? Let unfortunate Warsaw, and the miserable inhabitants of the suburb of Praga[2] in particular tell! What do we understand to have been the conduct of this magnanimous hero, with whom, it seems, Bonaparte is not to be compared? He entered the suburb of Praga, the most populous suburb of Warsaw; and there

[1] The Russian field marshal.

[2] Stormed on November 4, 1794, followed by horrible atrocities. Kosciusco commanded the Poles.

he let his soldiery loose on the miserable, unarmed, and unresisting people. Men, women, and children, nay, infants at the breast, were doomed to one indiscriminate massacre! Thousands of them were inhumanly, wantonly butchered, and for what? Because they have dared to join in a wish to ameliorate their own condition as a people, and to improve their Constitution, which had been confessed by their own sovereign to be in want of amendment. And such is the hero upon whom the cause of religion and social order is to repose! And such is the man whom we praise for his discipline and his virtue, and whom we hold out as our boast and our dependence; while the conduct of Bonaparte unfits him to be even treated with as an enemy?

"But France," it seems, "has roused all the nations of Europe against her"; and the long catalog has been read to you, to prove that she must have been atrocious to provoke them all. Is it true, sir, that she has roused them all? It does not say much for the address of his majesty's ministers, if this be the case. What, sir! have all your negotiations, all your declamations all your money, been squandered in vain? Have you not succeeded in stirring the indignation, and engaging the assistance, of a single power? But you do yourselves injustice. Between the crimes of France and your money the rage *has* been excited, and full as much is due to your seductions as to her atrocities. My

honorable and learned friend [Mr. Erskine] was correct, therefore, in his argument; for you can not take both sides of the case; you can not accuse France of having provoked all Europe, and at the same time claim the merit of having roused all Europe to join you.

No man regrets, sir, more than I do, the enormities that France has committed; but how do they bear upon the question as it at present stands? Are we for ever to deprive ourselves of the benefits of peace because France has perpetrated acts of injustice? Sir, we can not acquit ourselves upon such ground. We *have* negotiated. With the knowledge of these acts of injustice and disorder, we have treated with them twice; yet the right honorable gentleman can not enter into negotiation with them again; and it is worth while to attend to the reasons that he gives for refusing their offer. The Revolution itself is no more an objection now than it was in the year 1796, when he did negotiate. For the government of France at that time was surely as unstable as it is at present.

The right honorable gentleman, however, thinks otherwise; and he points out four distinct possible cases, besides the reestablishment of the Bourbon family, in which he would agree to treat with the French:

(1) "If Bonaparte shall conduct himself so as to convince him that he has abandoned the principles which were objectionable in his predecessors, and that he will be actuated by a more

moderate system." I ask you, sir, if this is likely to be ascertained in war? It is the nature of war not to allay, but to inflame the passions; and it is not by the invective and abuse which have been thrown upon him and his government, nor by the continued irritations which war is sure to give, that the virtues of moderation and forbearance are to be nourished.

(2) "If, contrary to the expectations of ministers, the people of France shall show a disposition to acquiesce in the government of Bonaparte." Does the right honorable gentleman mean to say, that because it is a usurpation on the part of the present chief, that therefore the people are not likely to acquiesce in it? I have not time, sir, to discuss the question of this usurpation, or whether it is likely to be permanent; but I certainly have not so good an opinion of the French, nor of any people, as to believe that it will be short-lived, *merely* because it was a usurpation, and because it is a system of military despotism. Cromwell was a usurper; and in many points there may be found a resemblance between him and the present chief consul of France. There is no doubt but that, on several occasions of his life, Cromwell's sincerity may be questioned, particularly in his self-denying ordinance, in his affected piety, and other things; but would it not have been insanity in France and Spain to refuse to treat with him because he was a usurper or wanted candor? No, sir, these are not the maxims by

which governments are actuated. They do not inquire so much into the means by which power may have been acquired, as into the fact of where the power resides. The people did acquiesce in the government of Cromwell.

But it may be said that the splendor of his talents, the vigor of his administration, the high tone with which he spoke to foreign nations, the success of his arms, and the character, which he gave to the English name, induced the nation to acquiesce in his usurpation; and that we must not try Bonaparte by his example. Will it be said that Bonaparte is not a man of great abilities? Will it be said that he has not, by his victories, thrown a splendor over even the violence of the Revolution, and that he does not conciliate the French people by the high and lofty tone in which he speaks to foreign nations? Are not the French, then, as likely as the English in the case of Cromwell, to acquiesce in his government? If they should do so, the right honorable gentleman may find that this possible predicament may fail him. He may find that tho one power may make war, it requires two to make peace.

(3) "If the allies of this country shall be less successful than they have every reason to expect they will be in stirring up the people of France against Bonaparte, and in the further prosecution of the war." And

(4) "If the pressure of the war should be heavier upon us than it would be convenient

for us to continue to bear." These are the other two possible emergencies in which the right honorable gentleman would treat even with Bonaparte. Sir, I have often blamed the right honorable gentleman for being disingenuous and insincere. On the present occasion I certainly can not charge him with any such thing. He has made to-night a most honest confession. He is open and candid. He tells Bonaparte fairly what he has to expect. "I mean," says he "to do everything in my power to raise up the people of France against you; I have engaged a number of allies, and our combined efforts shall be used to excite insurrection and civil war in France. I will strive to murder you, or to get you sent away. If I succeed, well; but if I fail, then I will treat with you. My resources being exhausted, even my 'solid system of finance' having failed to supply me with the means of keeping together my allies, and of feeding the discontents I have excited in France—then you may expect to see me renounce my high tone, my attachment to the House of Bourbon, my abhorrence of your crimes, my alarm at your principles; for then I shall be ready to own that, on the balance and comparison of circumstances, there will be less danger in concluding a peace than in the continuance of war!" Is this political language for one state to hold to another? And what sort of peace does the right honorable gentleman expect to receive in that case? Does he think that Bonaparte would

grant to baffled insolence, to humiliated pride, to disappointment, and to imbecility the same terms which he would be ready to give now?

Sir, we have heard to-night a great many most acrimonious invectives against Bonaparte, against all the course of his conduct, and against the unprincipled manner in which he seized upon the reins of government. I will not make his defense. I think all this sort of invective, which is used only to inflame the passions of this House and of the country, exceedingly ill-timed, and very impolitic. But I say I will not make his defense. I am not sufficiently in possession of materials upon which to form an opinion on the character and conduct of this extraordinary man.

On his arrival in France, he found the government in a very unsettled state, and the whole affairs of the Republic deranged, crippled, and involved. He thought it necessary to reform the government; and he did reform it, just in the way in which a military man may be expected to carry on a reform. He seized on the whole authority for himself. It will not be expected from me that I should either approve or apologize for such an act. I am certainly not for reforming governments by such expedients; but how this House can be so violently indignant at the idea of military despotism, is, I own, a little singular, when I see the composure with which they can observe it nearer home—nay, when I see them regard it as a

frame of government most peculiarly suited to the exercise of free opinion, on a subject the most important of any that can engage the attention of a people. Was it not the system which was so *happily* and so *advantageously* established of late, all over Ireland, and which even now the government may, at its pleasure, proclaim over the whole of that kingdom? Are not the persons and property of the people left, in many districts, at this moment, to the entire will of military commanders?[1]

"It is not the interest of Bonaparte," it seems, "sincerely to enter into a negotiation, or if he should even make peace, sincerely to keep it." But how are we to decide upon his sincerity? By refusing to treat with him? Surely, if we mean to discover his sincerity, we ought to hear the propositions which he desires to make. "But peace would be unfriendly to his system of military despotism." Sir, I hear a great deal about the short-lived nature of military despotism. I wish the history of the world would bear gentlemen out in this description of it. Was not the government erected by Augustus Cæsar a military despotism? and yet it endured for six or seven hundred years. Military despotism, unfortunately, is too likely in its nature to be permanent, and it is not true that it depends on the life of the first usurper.

[1] The situation here described was that which existed before the Union, but after the rebellion had practically been suppressed. The union of the two kingdoms was effected on January 1, 1801.

Tho half of the Roman emperors were murdered, yet the military despotism went on; and so it would be, I fear, in France. If Bonaparte should disappear from the scene, to make room perhaps, for Berthier, or any other general, what difference would that make in the quality of French despotism, or in our relation to the country? We may as safely treat with a Bonaparte, or with any of his successors, be they who they may, as we could with a Louis XVI., a Louis XVII., or a Louis XVIII. There is no difference but in the name. Where the power essentially resides, thither we ought to go for peace.

But, sir, if we are to reason on the fact, I should think that it is the interest of Bonaparte to make peace. A lover of military glory, as that general must necessarily be, may he not think that his measure of glory is full; that it may be tarnished by a reverse of fortune, and can hardly be increased by any new laurels? He must feel that, in the situation to which he is now raised, he can no longer depend on his own fortune, his own genius, and his own talents, for a continuance of his success. He must be under the necessity of employing other generals, whose misconduct or incapacity might endanger his power, or whose triumphs even might affect the interest which he holds in the opinion of the French. Peace, then, would secure to him what he has achieved, and fix the inconstancy of fortune.

But this will not be his only motive. He must see that France also requires a respite—a breathing interval, to recruit her wasted strength. To procure her this respite, would be, perhaps, the attainment of more solid glory, as well as the means of acquiring more solid power, than anything which he can hope to gain from arms, and from the proudest triumphs. May he not, then, be zealous to secure this fame, the only species of fame, perhaps, that is worth acquiring? Nay, granting that his soul may still burn with the thirst of military exploits, is it not likely that he is disposed to yield to the feelings of the French people, and to consolidate his power by consulting their interests? I have a right to argue in this way when suppositions of his insincerity are reasoned upon on the other side. Sir, these aspersions are, in truth, always idle, and even mischievous. I have been too long accustomed to hear imputations and calumnies thrown out upon great and honorable characters, to be much influenced by them.

My honorable and learned friend [Mr. Erskine] has paid this night a most just, deserved, and eloquent tribute of applause to the memory of that great and unparalleled character, who is so recently lost to the world.[1] I must, like him, beg leave to dwell a moment on the venerable George Washington, tho I know that it is impossible for me to bestow anything like

[1] News of Washington's death had reached England only a short time before the date of this speech.

adequate praise on a character which gave us, more than any other human being, the example of a perfect man; yet, good, great, and unexampled as General Washington was, I can remember the time when he was not better spoken of in this House than Bonaparte is at present. The right honorable gentleman who opened this debate [Mr. Dundas] may remember in what terms of disdain, or virulence, even of contempt, General Washington was spoken of by gentlemen on that side of the House. Does he not recollect with what marks of indignation any member was stigmatized as an enemy to this country who mentioned with common respect the name of General Washington? If a negotiation had then been proposed to be opened with that great man, what would have been said? Would you treat with a rebel, a traitor! What an example would you not give by such an act! I do not know whether the right honorable gentleman may not yet possess some of his old prejudices on the subject. I hope not: I hope by this time we are all convinced that a republican government, like that of America, may exist without danger or injury to social order, or to established monarchies. They have happily shown that they can maintain the relations of peace and amity with other states. They have shown, too, that they are alive to the feelings of honor; but they do not lose sight of plain good sense and discretion. They have not refused to negotiate with the French, and they

have accordingly the hopes of a speedy termination of every difference. We cry up their conduct, but we do not imitate it.

Where, then, sir, is this war, which on every side is pregnant with such horrors, to be carried? Where is it to stop? Not till we establish the House of Bourbon! And this you cherish the hope of doing, because you have had a successful campaign. So that we are called upon to go on merely as a speculation. We must keep Bonaparte for some time longer at war, as a state of probation. Gracious God, sir! is war a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other? Are your vigilance, your policy, your common powers of observation, to be extinguished by putting an end to the horrors of war? Can not this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalog of human sufferings? "But we must *pause!*" What! must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out—her best blood be spilled—her treasures wasted—that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves—oh! that you would put yourselves in the field of battle, and learn to judge of the sort of horrors that you excite! In former wars a man might, at least, have some feeling, some interest, that served to balance in his mind the impressions which a scene of carnage and of death must inflict.

If a man had been present at the Battle of Blenheim, for instance, and had inquired the

motive of the battle, there was not a soldier engaged who could not have satisfied his curiosity, and even, perhaps, allayed his feelings. They were fighting, they knew, to repress the uncontrolled ambition of the Grand Monarch. But if a man were present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting— "Fighting!" would be the answer; "they are not fighting; they are *pausing.*" "Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing with agony? What means this implacable fury?" The answer must be: "You are quite wrong, sir; you deceive yourself—they are not fighting—do not disturb them—they are merely *pausing!* This man is not expiring with agony—that man is not dead—he is only pausing! Lord help you, sir! they are not angry with one another; they have no cause of quarrel; but their country thinks that there should be a *pause.* All that you see, sir, is nothing like fighting—there is no harm, nor cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever; it is nothing more than a *political pause!* It is merely to try an experiment—to see whether Bonaparte will not behave himself better than heretofore; and in the meantime we have agreed to a *pause,* in pure friendship!" And is this the way, sir, that you are to show yourselves the advocates of order? You take up a system calculated to uncivilize the world—to destroy order—to trample on religion—to stifle in the heart, not merely the generosity of noble sentiment, but

the affections of social nature; and in the prosecution of this system, you spread terror and devastation all around you.

Sir, I have done. I have told you my opinion. I think you ought to have given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which was fairly and handsomely made you. If you were desirous that the negotiation should have included all your allies, as the means of bringing about a general peace, you should have told Bonaparte so. But I believe you were afraid of his agreeing to the proposal.[1]

[1] In spite of Fox's eloquent appeal, Parliament supported Pitt, the vote in the House being 265 for, to 64 against the address approving the action of the minority.

WILBERFORCE

ON THE HORRORS OF THE SLAVE TRADE[1]

(1789)

Born in 1759, died in 1833; elected to Parliament in 1780; began to agitate against slavery in 1787; secured its abolition in 1807.

In opening, concerning the nature of the slave trade, I need only observe that it is found by experience to be just such as every man who uses his reason would infallibly conclude it to be. For my own part, so clearly am I convinced of the mischiefs inseparable from it, that I should hardly want any further evidence than my own mind would furnish, by the most simple deductions. Facts, however, are now laid before the House. A report has been made by his majesty's privy council, which, I trust, every gentleman has read, and which ascertains the slave trade to be just as we know. What should we suppose must naturally be the consequence of our carrying on a slave trade with Africa? With a country vast in its extent, not utterly barbarous, but civilized in a very small degree? Does any one suppose a slave trade would help their civilization? Is it not plain that she must

[1] From a speech in the House of Commons on May 12, 1789, in support of his own resolution condemning the slave trade, which with the help of Pitt, Burke, and Fox, was carried without a division. Abridged.

suffer from it; that civilization must be checked; that her barbarous manners must be made more barbarous; and that the happiness of her millions of inhabitants must be prejudiced with her intercourse with Britain? Does not every one see that a slave trade carried on around her coasts must carry violence and desolation to her very center? That in a continent just emerging from barbarism, if a trade in men is established, if her men are all converted into goods, and become commodities that can be bartered, it follows they must be subject to ravage just as goods are; and this, too, at a period of civilization, when there is no protecting legislature to defend this, their only sort of property, in the same manner as the rights of property are maintained by the legislature of every civilized country.

We see then, in the nature of things, how easily the practices of Africa are to be accounted for. Her kings are never compelled to war, that we can hear of, by public principles, by national glory, still less by the love of their people. In Europe it is the extension of commerce, the maintenance of national honor, or some great public object, that is ever the motive to war with every monarch; but, in Africa, it is the personal avarice and sensuality of their kings. These two vices of avarice and sensuality, the most powerful and predominant in natures thus corrupt, we tempt, we stimulate in all these African princes, and we depend upon these vices

for the very maintenance of the slave trade. Does the king of Barbessin want brandy? He has only to send his troops, in the night-time, to burn and desolate a village; the captives will serve as commodities, that may be bartered with the British trader.

The slave trade, in its very nature, is the source of such kind of tragedies; nor has there been a single person, almost, before the privy council, who does not add something by his testimony to the mass of evidence upon this point. Some, indeed, of these gentlemen, and particularly the delegates from Liverpool, have endeavored to reason down this plain principle; some have palliated it; but there is not one, I believe, who does not more or less admit it. Some, nay most, I believe, have admitted the slave trade to be the chief cause of wars in Africa.

Having now disposed of the first part of this subject, I must speak of the transit of the slaves to the West Indies. This, I confess, in my own opinion, is the most wretched part of the whole subject. So much misery condensed in so little room is more than the human imagination had ever before conceived. I will not accuse the Liverpool merchants. I will allow them, nay, I will believe them, to be men of humanity; and I will therefore believe, if it were not for the multitude of these wretched objects, if it were not for the enormous magnitude and extent of the evil which distracts their attention from in-

dividual cases, and makes them think generally, and therefore less feelingly on the subject, they never would have persisted in the trade. I verily believe, therefore, if the wretchedness of any one of the many hundred negroes stowed in each ship could be brought before their view, and remain within the sight of the African merchant, that there is no one among them whose heart would bear it.

Let any one imagine to himself six or seven hundred of these wretches chained two and two, surrounded with every object that is nauseous and disgusting, diseased, and struggling under every kind of wretchedness! How can we bear to think of such a scene as this? One would think it had been determined to heap on them all the varieties of bodily pain, for the purpose of blunting the feelings of the mind; and yet, in this very point (to show the power of human prejudice), the situation of the slaves has been described by Mr. Norris, one of the Liverpool delegates, in a manner which I am sure will convince the House how interest can draw a film over the eyes, so thick that total blindness could do no more; and how it is our duty therefore to trust not to the reasonings of interested men, nor to their way of coloring a transaction.

"Their apartments," says Mr. Norris, "are fitted up as much for their advantage as circumstances will admit. The right ankle of one, indeed, is connected with the left ankle of another by a small iron fetter, and if they are turbulent,

by another on their wrists. They have several meals a day—some of their own country provisions, with the best sauces of African cookery; and by the way of variety, another meal of pulse, etc., according to European taste. After breakfast they have water to wash themselves, while their apartments are perfumed with frankincense and lime juice. Before dinner they are amused after the manner of their country. The song and the dance are promoted," and, as if the whole were really a scene of pleasure and dissipation, it is added that games of chance are furnished. "The men play and sing, while the women and girls make fanciful ornaments with beads, with which they are plentifully supplied." Such is the sort of strain in which the Liverpool delegates, and particularly Mr. Norris, gave evidence before the privy council. What will the House think when, by the concurring testimony of other witnesses, the true history is laid open? The slaves, who are sometimes described as rejoicing at their captivity, are so wrung with misery at leaving their country, that it is the constant practise to set sail in the night, lest they should be sensible of their departure. The pulse which Mr. Norris talks of are horse beans; and the scantiness of both water and provision was suggested by the very legislature of Jamaica, in the report of their committee, to be a subject that called for the interference of Parliament.

Mr. Norris talks of frankincense and lime

juice: when the surgeons tell you the slaves are stored so close that there is not room to tread among them; and when you have it in evidence from Sir George Young, that even in a ship which wanted two hundred of her complement, the stench was intolerable. The song and the dance are promoted, says Mr. Norris. It had been more fair, perhaps, if he had explained that word "promoted." The truth is, that for the sake of exercise, these miserable wretches, loaded with chains, oppressed with disease and wretchedness, are forced to dance by the terror of the lash, and sometimes by the actual use of it. "I," says one of the other evidences, "was employed to dance the men, while another person danced the women." Such, then, is the meaning of the word "promoted"; and it may be observed, too, with respect to food, that an instrument is sometimes carried out in order to force them to eat, which is the same sort of proof how much they enjoy themselves in that instance also.

As to their singing, what shall we say when we are told that their songs are songs of lamentation upon their departure which, while they sing, are always in tears, insomuch that one captain (more humane as I should conceive him, therefore, than the rest) threatened one of the women with a flogging, because the mournfulness of her son was too painful for his feelings. In order, however, not to trust too much to any sort of description, I will call the attention of

the House to one species of evidence, which is absolutely infallible. Death, at least, is a sure ground of evidence, and the proportion of deaths will not only confirm, but, if possible, will even aggravate our suspicion of their misery in the transit. It will be found, upon an average of all ships of which evidence has been given at the privy council, that exclusive of those who perish before they sail, not less than twelve and one-half per cent. perish in the passage. Besides these, the Jamaica report tells you that not less than four and one-half per cent. die on shore before the day of sale, which is only a week or two from the time of landing. One-third more die in the seasoning, and this in a country exactly like their own, where they are healthy and happy, as some of the evidences would pretend. The diseases, however, which they contract on shipboard, the astringent washes which are to hide their wounds, and the mischievous tricks used to make them up for sale, are, as the Jamaica report says—a most precious and valuable report, which I shall often have to advert to—one principal cause of this mortality. Upon the whole, however, here is a mortality of about fifty per cent., and this among negroes who are not bought unless quite healthy at first, and unless (as the phrase is with cattle) they are sound in wind and limb.

When we consider the vastness of the continent of Africa; when we reflect how all other countries have for some centuries past been ad-

vancing in happiness and civilization; when we think how in this same period all improvement in Africa has been defeated by her intercourse with Britain; when we reflect that it is we ourselves that have degraded them to that wretched brutishness and barbarity which we now plead as the justification of our guilt; how the slave trade has enslaved their minds, blackened their character, and sunk them so low in the scale of animal beings that some think the apes are of a higher class, and fancy the orang-outang has given them the go-by. What a mortification must we feel at having so long neglected to think of our guilt, or attempt any reparation! It seems, indeed, as if we had determined to forbear from all interference until the measure of our folly and wickedness was so full and complete; until the impolicy which eventually belongs to vice was become so plain and glaring that not an individual in the country should refuse to join in the abolition; it seems as if we had waited until the persons most interested should be tired out with the folly and nefariousness of the trade, and should unite in petitioning against it.

Let us then make such amends as we can for the mischiefs we have done to the unhappy continent; let us recollect what Europe itself was no longer ago than three or four centuries. What if I should be able to show this House that in a civilized part of Europe, in the time of our Henry VII., there were people who actually sold

their own children? What if I should tell them that England itself was that country? What if I should point out to them that the very place where this inhuman traffic was carried on was the city of Bristol? Ireland at that time used to drive a considerable trade in slaves with these neighboring barbarians; but a great plague having infested the country, the Irish were struck with a panic, suspected (I am sure very properly) that the plague was a punishment sent from heaven for the sin of the slave trade, and therefore abolished it. All I ask, therefore, of the people of Bristol is, that they would become as civilized now as Irishmen were four hundred years ago. Let us put an end at once to this inhuman traffic—let us stop this effusion of human blood.

The true way to virtue is by withdrawing from temptation; let us then withdraw from these wretched Africans those temptations to fraud, violence, cruelty, and injustice, which the slave trade furnishes. Wherever the sun shines, let us go round the world with him, diffusing our benevolence; but let us not traffic, only that we may set kings against their subjects, subjects against their kings, sowing discord in every village, fear and terror in every family, setting millions of our fellow creatures a-hunting each other for slaves, creating fairs and markets for human flesh through one whole continent of the world, and, under the name of policy, concealing from ourselves all the baseness and iniquity of such a traffic.

It will appear from everything which I have said, that it is not regulation, it is not mere palliatives, that can cure this enormous evil. Total abolition is the only possible cure for it. The Jamaica report, indeed, admits much of the evil, but recommends it to us so to regulate the trade that no persons should be kidnapped or made slaves contrary to the custom of Africa. But may they not be made slaves unjustly, and yet by no means contrary to the custom of Africa? I have shown they may, for all the customs of Africa are rendered savage and unjust through the influence of this trade; besides, how can we discriminate between the slaves justly and unjustly made? or, if we could, does any man believe that the British captains can, by any regulation in this country, be prevailed upon to refuse all such slaves as have not been fairly, honestly, and uprightly enslaved? But granting even that they should do this, yet how would the rejected slaves be recompensed? They are brought, as we are told, from three or four thousand miles off, and exchanged like cattle from one hand to another, until they reach the coast. We see then that it is the existence of the slave trade that is the spring of all this infernal traffic, and that the remedy can not be applied without abolition.

And, sir, when we think of eternity, and of the future consequences of all human conduct, what is there in this life that should make any man contradict the dictates of his conscience, the

principles of justice, the laws of religion, and of God? Sir, the nature and all the circumstances of this trade are now laid open to us; we can no longer plead ignorance, we can not evade it; it is now an object placed before us, we can not pass it; we may spurn it, we may kick it out of our way, but we can not turn aside so as to avoid seeing it; for it is brought now so directly before our eyes that this House must decide, and must justify to all the world, and to their own consciences, the rectitude of the grounds and principles of their decision.

ERSKINE

ON LIMITATIONS TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH[1]

(1797)

Born in 1750, died in 1823; elected to Parliament in 1790; raised to the peerage and made Lord Chancellor in 1806.

A FREE and unlicensed Press, in the just and legal sense of the expression, has led to all the blessings, both of religion and government, which Great Britain or any part of the world at this moment enjoys, and it is calculated to advance mankind to still higher degrees of civilization and happiness. But this freedom, like every other, must be limited to be enjoyed and like every human advantage, may be defeated by its abuse.

I am well aware that by the communications of a free Press, all the errors of mankind, from age to age, have been dissipated and dispelled; and I recollect that the world, under the banners of reformed Christianity, has struggled through persecution to the noble eminence on which it stands at this moment, shedding the blessings

[1] Delivered in 1797 in the prosecution of one Williams, a bookseller, for selling Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason." Five years before this Erskine had defended Paine for publishing "The Rights of Man." "The Age of Reason," however, was an attack on Christianity. Of all his speeches Erskine is believed to have liked this best. Abridged.

of humanity and science upon the nations of the earth.

It may be asked, then, by what means the reformation would have been effected, if the books of the reformers had been suppressed, and the errors of now exploded superstitions had been supported by the terrors of an unreformed state? or how, upon such principles, any reformation, civil or religious, can in future be effected? The solution is easy: let us examine what are the genuine principle of the liberty of the Press, as they regard writings upon general subjects, unconnected with the personal reputations of private men, which are wholly foreign to the present inquiry. They are full of simplicity, and are brought as near perfection, by the law of England, as perhaps is attainable by any of the frail institutions of mankind.

Altho every community must establish supreme authorities, founded upon fixed principles, and must give high powers to magistrates to administer laws for the preservation of government, and for the security of those who are to be protected by it; yet as infallibility and perfection belong neither to human individuals nor to human establishments, it ought to be the policy of all free nations, as it is most peculiarly the principle of our own, to permit the most unbounded freedom of discussion, even to the detection of errors in the Constitution of the very government itself; so as that common decorum is observed, which every State must exact from

its subjects and which imposes no restraint upon any intellectual composition, fairly, honestly, and decently addressed to the consciences and understandings of men. Upon this principle I have an unquestionable right, a right which the best subjects have exercised, to examine the principles and structure of the Constitution, and by fair, manly reasoning, to question the practise of its administrators. I have a right to consider and to point out errors in the one or in the other; and not merely to reason upon their existence, but to consider the means of their reformation.

By such free, well-intentioned, modest, and dignified communication of sentiments and opinions, all nations have been gradually improved, and milder laws and purer religions have been established. The same principles which vindicate civil controversies, honestly directed, extend their protection to the sharpest contentions on the subject of religious faiths. This rational and legal course of improvement was recognized and ratified by Lord Kenyon as the law of England, in the late trial at Guildhall, where he looked back with gratitude to the labors of the reformers, as the fountains of our religious emancipation, and of the civil blessings that followed in their train. The English Constitution, indeed, does not stop short in the toleration of religious opinions, but liberally extends it to practise. It permits every man, even publicly, to worship God according to his own conscience, tho in

marked dissent from the national establishment, so as he professes the general faith, which is the sanction of all our moral duties, and the only pledge of our submission to the system which constitutes the State.

Is not this freedom of controversy and freedom of worship sufficient for all the purposes of human happiness and improvement? Can it be necessary for either, that the law should hold out indemnity to those who wholly abjure and revile the government of their country, or the religion on which it rests for its foundation? I expect to hear in answer to what I am now saying, much that will offend me. My learned friend, from the difficulties of his situation, which I know from experience how to feel for very sincerely, may be driven to advance propositions which it may be my duty with much freedom to reply to; and the law will sanction that freedom. But will not the ends of justice be completely answered by my exercise of that right, in terms that are decent, and calculated to expose its defects? Or will my argument suffer, or will public justice be impeded, because neither private honor and justice nor public decorum would endure my telling my very learned friend, because I differ from him in opinion, that he is a fool, a liar, and a scoundrel, in the face of the court? This is just the distinction between a book of free legal controversy, and the book which I am arraigning before you. Every man has a right to investigate, with decency, contro-

versial points of the Christian religion; but no man consistently with a law which only exists under its sanctions has a right to deny its very existence, and to pour forth such shocking and insulting invectives as the lowest establishments in the graduation of civil authority ought not to be subjected to, and which soon would be borne down by insolence and disobedience, if they were.

The same principle pervades the whole system of the law, not merely in its abstract theory, but in its daily and most applauded practise. The intercourse between the sexes, which, properly regulated, not only continues, but humanizes and adorns our natures, is the foundation of all the thousand romances, plays and novels, which are in the hands of everybody. Some of them lead to the confirmation of every virtuous principle; others, tho with the same profession, address the imagination in a manner to lead the passions into dangerous excesses; but tho the law does not nicely discriminate the various shades which distinguish such works from one another, so as to suffer many to pass, through its liberal spirit, that upon principle ought to be suppressed, would it or does it tolerate, or does any decent man contend that it ought to pass by unpunished, libels of the most shameless obscenity, manifestly pointed to debauch innocent and to blast and poison the morals of the rising generation? This is only another illustration to demonstrate the obvious distinction

between the work of an author who fairly exercises the powers of his mind in investigating the religion of government of any country, and him who attacks the rational existence of every religion or government, and brands with absurdity and folly the state which sanctions, and the obedient tools who cherish, the delusion.

But this publication appears to me to be as cruel and mischievous in its effects, as it is manifestly illegal in its principles; because it strikes at the best—sometimes, alas!—the only refuge and consolation amid the distresses and afflictions of the world. The poor and humble, whom it affects to pity, may be stabbed to the heart by it. They have more occasion for firm hopes beyond the grave than the rich and prosperous who have other comforts to render life delightful. I can conceive a distressed but virtuous man, surrounded by his children looking up to him for bread when he has none to give them; sinking under the last day's labor, and unequal to the next, yet still, supported by confidence in the hour when all tears shall be wiped from the eyes of affliction, bearing the burden laid upon him by a mysterious Providence which he adores, and anticipating with exultation the revealed promises of his Creator, when he shall be greater than the greatest, and happier than the happiest of mankind. What a change in such a mind might be wrought by such a merciless publication!

How any man can rationally vindicate the publication of such a book, in a country where the Christian religion is the very foundation of the law of the land, I am totally at a loss to conceive, and have no ideas for the discussion of. How is a tribunal whose whole jurisdiction is founded upon the solemn belief and practise of what is here denied as falsehood, and reprobated as impiety, to deal with such an anomalous defense? Upon what principle is it even offered to the court, whose authority is contemned and mocked at? If the religion proposed to be called in question, is not previously adopted in belief and solemnly acted upon, what authority has the court to pass any judgment at all of acquittal or condemnation? Why am I now or upon any other occasion to submit to his lordship's authority? Why am I now or at any time to address twelve of my equals, as I am now addressing you, with reverence and submission? Under what sanction are the witnesses to give their evidence, without which there can be no trial? Under what obligations can I call upon you, the jury representing your country, to administer justice? Surely upon no other than that you are sworn to administer it, under the oaths you have taken. The whole judicial fabric, from the king's sovereign authority to the lowest office of magistracy, has no other foundation. The whole is built, both in form and substance, upon the same oath of every one of its ministers to do justice, as God shall help them

hereafter. What God? And what hereafter? That God, undoubtedly, who has commanded kings to rule, and judges to decree justice; who has said to witnesses, not only by the voice of nature but in revealed commandments, "Thou shalt not bear false testimony against thy neighbor"; and who has enforced obedience to them by the revelation of the unutterable blessings which shall attend their observance, and the awful punishments which shall await upon their transgression.

But it seems this is an age of reason, and the time and the person are at last arrived that are to dissipate the errors which have overspread the past generations of ignorance. The believers in Christianity are many, but it belongs to the few that are wise to correct their credulity. Belief is an act of reason, and superior reason may, therefore, dictate to the weak. In running the mind over the long list of sincere and devout Christians, I can not help lamenting that Newton had not lived to this day, to have had his shallowness filled up with this new flood of light. But the subject is too awful for irony; I will speak plainly and directly. Newton was a Christian: Newton, whose mind burst forth from the fetters fastened by nature upon our finite conceptions; Newton, whose science was truth, and the foundations of whose knowledge of it was philosophy—not those visionary and arrogant presumptions which too often usurp its name, but philosophy resting upon the basis of mathe-

matics, which, like figures, can not lie; Newton, who carried the line and rule to the uttermost barriers of creation, and explored the principles by which all created matter exists and is held together. But this extraordinary man, in the might reach of this mind, overlooked, perhaps, the errors which a minuter investigation of the created things on this earth might have taught him.

What shall then be said of Mr. Boyle,[1] who looked into the organic structure of all matter, even to the inanimate substances which the foot treads upon? Such a man may be supposed to have been equally qualified with Mr. Paine to look up through nature to nature's God; yet the result of all his contemplations was the most confirmed and devout belief in all which the other holds in contempt as despicable and driveling superstition. But this error might, perhaps, arise from a want of due attention to the foundations of human judgment, and the structure of that understanding which God has given us for the investigation of truth. Let that question be answered by Mr. Locke, who to the highest pitch of devotion and adoration was a Christian; Mr. Locke, whose office was to detect the errors of thinking, by going up to the very fountains of thought, and to direct into the proper track of reasoning the devious mind of man, by

[1] Robert Boyle, born in 1627, the chemist and physicist, who founded the Boyle Lectureship for the Defense of Christianity.

showing him its whole process, from the first perceptions of sense, to the last conclusions of ratiocination, putting a rein upon false opinion, by practical rules for the conduct of human judgment.

But these men, it may be said, were only deep thinkers, and lived in their closets, unaccustomed to the traffic of the world, and to the laws which practically regulate mankind. Gentlemen, in the place where we now sit to administer the justice of this great country, the never-to-be-forgotten Sir Matthew Hale once presided; whose faith in Christianity is an exalted commentary upon its truth and reason, and whose life was a glorious example of its fruits; whose justice, drawn from the pure fountain of the Christian dispensation, will be, in all ages, a subject of the highest reverence and admiration. But it is said by the author, that the Christian fable is but the tale of the more ancient superstitions of the world, and may be easily detected by a proper understanding of the mythologies of the heathens. Did Milton understand those mythologies? Was he less versed than Mr. Paine in the superstitions of the world? No, they were the subject of his immortal song; and, tho shut out from all recurrence to them, he poured them forth from the stores of a memory rich with all that man ever knew, and laid them in their order as the illustration of real and exalted faith, the unquestionable source of that fervid genius

which has cast a kind of shade upon most of the other works of man:

> "He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time:
> The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
> Where angels tremble while they gaze,
> He saw but blasted with excess of light,
> Closed his eyes in endless night."[1]

Thus, you find all that is great, or wise, or splendid, or illustrious, among created things; all the minds gifted beyond ordinary nature, if not inspired by its universal Author for the advancement and dignity of the world, tho divided by distant ages, and by clashing opinions, yet joining as it were in one sublime chorus, to celebrate the truths of Christianity; laying upon its holy altars the never-fading offerings of their immortal wisdom.

Against all this concurring testimony, we find suddenly, from the author of this book, that the Bible teaches nothing but "lies, obscenity, cruelty, and injustice." Had he ever read our Savior's sermon on the mount, in which the great principles of our faith and duty are summed up? Let us all but read and practise it, and lies, obscenity, cruelty and injustice, and all human wickedness will be banished from the world!

Gentlemen, there is but one consideration more, which I can not possibly omit, because I confess it affects me very decply. The author of this book has written largely on public liberty

[1] These lines are from Gray's poem, "The Progress of Poesy."

and government[1]; and this last performance, which I am now prosecuting, has, on that account, been more widely circulated, and principally among those who attached themselves from principle to his former works. This circumstance renders a public attack upon all revealed religion from such a writer infinitely more dangerous. The religious and moral sense of the people of Great Britain is the great anchor which alone can hold the vessel of the state amid the storms which agitate the world; and if the mass of the people were debauched from the principles of religion—the true basis of that humanity, charity, and benevolence, which have been so long the national characteristics—instead of mixing myself, as I sometimes have done, in political reformations, I would retire to the uttermost corners of the earth, to avoid their agitation; and would bear, not only the imperfections and abuses complained of in our own wise establishment, but even the worst government that ever existed in the world, rather than go to the work of reformation with a multitude set free from all the charities of Christianity, who had no other sense of God's existence than was to be collected from Mr. Paine's observations of nature, which the mass of mankind have no leisure to contemplate, which promises no future rewards to animate the good in the glorious pursuit of human happiness, nor punishments to

[1] Paine's "Common Sense" had appeared in 1776 and "The Rights of Man" in 1792.

deter the wicked from destroying it even in its birth. The people of England are a religious people, and, with the blessing of God, so far as it is in my power, I will lend aid to keep them so.

Gentlemen, I can not conclude without expressing the deepest regret at all attacks upon the Christian religion by authors who profess to promote the civil liberties of the world. For under what other auspices than Christianity have the lost and subverted liberties of mankind in former ages been reasserted? By what zeal, but the warm zeal of devout Christians, have English liberties been redeemed and consecrated? Under what other sanctions, even in our own days, have liberty and happiness been spreading to the uttermost corners of the earth? What work of civilization, what commonwealth of greatness, has this bald religion of nature ever established? We see, on the contrary, the nations that have no other light than that of nature to direct them, sunk in barbarism, or slaves to arbitrary governments; while under the Christian dispensation, the great career of the world has been slowly but clearly advancing, lighter at every step from the encouraging prophecies of the gospel, and leading, I trust, in the end to universal and eternal happiness. Each generation of mankind can see but a few revolving links of this mighty and mysterious chain; but by doing our several duties in our allotted stations, we are sure that we are fulfilling the purposes of our existence. You, I trust, will fulfil yours this day.

MACKINTOSH

A PLEA FOR FREE SPEECH[1]

(1803)

Born in 1765, died in 1832; Recorder in Bombay in 1803; Admiralty Judge in Bombay in 1806; elected to Parliament in 1813; Professor of Law in 1818-24.

THE time is now come for me to address you in behalf of the unfortunate gentleman who is the defendant on this record. The charge which I have to defend is surrounded with the most invidious topics of discussion; but they are not of my seeking. The case and the topics which are inseparable from it are brought here by the prosecutor. Here I find them, and here it is my duty to deal with them, as the interests of Mr. Peltier seem to me to require. He, by his choice and confidence, has cast on me a very arduous duty, which I could not decline, and which I can still less betray. He has a right to expect from me a faithful, a zealous, and a fearless defense; and this his just expectation,

[1] Delivered before the Court of King's Bench in February, 1803, at the trial of Jean Peltier, accused of libeling Napoleon Bonaparte. Peltier, in a paper called "L'Ambigu," had suggested that Bonaparte, then first consul, be assassinated. He was found guilty, but the sentence was never pronounced, inasmuch as war with France was soon resumed. Leslie Stephen says this speech was Mackintosh's "greatest performance." Abridged.

according to the measure of my humble abilities, shall be fulfilled. I have said a fearless defense. Perhaps that word was unnecessary in the place where I now stand. Intrepidity in the discharge of professional duty is so common a quality at the English bar, that it has, thank God, long ceased to be a matter of boast or praise. If it had been otherwise, gentlemen, if the bar could have been silenced or overawed by power, I may presume to say that an English jury would not this day have been met to administer justice. Perhaps I need scarce say that my defense *shall* be fearless, in a place where fear never entered any heart but that of a criminal. But you will pardon me for having said so much when you consider who the real parties before you are.

Gentlemen, the real prosecutor is the master of the greatest empire the civilized world ever saw. The defendant is a defenseless, proscribed exile. He is a French royalist, who fled from his country in the autumn of 1792, at the period of that memorable and awful emigration, when all the proprietors and magistrates of the greatest civilized country in Europe were driven from their homes by the daggers of assassins; when our shores were covered, as with the wreck of a great tempest, with old men, and women, and children, and ministers of religion, who fled from the ferocity of their countrymen as before an army of invading barbarians.

You will not think unfavorably of a man who stands before you as the voluntary victim of

his loyalty and honor. If a revolution (which God avert) were to drive us into exile, and to cast us on a foreign shore, we should expect, at least, to be pardoned by generous men, for stubborn loyalty and unseasonable fidelity to the laws and government of our fathers.

This unfortunate gentleman had devoted a great part of his life to literature. It was the amusement and ornament of his better days. Since his own ruin and the desolation of his country, he has been compelled to employ it as a means of support. For the last ten years he has been engaged in a variety of publications of considerable importance; but since the peace he has desisted from serious political discussion, and confined himself to the obscure journal which is now before you; the least calculated, surely, of any publication that ever issued from the Press, to rouse the alarms of the most jealous government; which will not be read in England, because it is not written in our language; which can not be read in France, because its entry into that country is prohibited by a power whose mandates are not very supinely enforced, nor often evaded with impunity; which can have no other object than that of amusing the companions of the author's principles and misfortunes, by pleasantries and sarcasms on their victorious enemies. There is, indeed, gentlemen, one remarkable circumstance in this unfortunate publication; it is the only, or almost the only, journal which still dares to espouse

the cause of that royal illustrious family which but fourteen years ago was flattered by every Press and guarded by every tribunal in Europe. Even the court in which we are met affords an example of the vicissitudes of their fortune. My learned friend has reminded you that the last prosecution tried in this place, at the instance of a French government, was for a libel on that magnanimous princess, who has since been butchered in sight of her palace.

There is another point of view in which this case seems to me to merit your most serious attention. I consider it as the first of a long series of conflicts between the greatest power in the world and the only free Press remaining in Europe. No man living is more thoroughly convinced than I am that my learned friend, Mr. Attorney-General, will never degrade his excellent character, that he will never disgrace his high magistracy by mean compliances, by an immoderate and unconscientious exercise of power; yet I am convinced, by circumstances which I shall now abstain from discussing, that I am to consider this as the first of a long series of conflicts between the greatest power in the world and the only free Press now remaining in Europe. Gentlemen, this distinction of the English Press is new; it is a proud and melancholy distinction. Before the great earthquake of the French Revolution had swallowed up all the asylums of free discussion on the continent, we enjoyed that privilege, indeed, more fully

than others; but we did not enjoy it exclusively.

Unfortunately for the repose of mankind, great States are compelled by regard to their own safety, to consider the military spirit and martial habits of their people as one of the main objects of their policy. Frequent hostilities seem almost the necessary condition of their greatness; and, without being great, they can not long remain safe. Smaller States exempted from this cruel necessity—a hard condition of greatness, a bitter satire on human nature—devoted themselves to the arts of peace, to the cultivation of literature, and the improvement of reason. They became places of refuge for free and fearless discussion; they were the impartial spectators and judges of the various contests of ambition which from time to time disturbed the quiet of the world. They thus became peculiarly qualified to be the organs of that public opinion which converted Europe into a great republic, with laws which mitigated, tho they could not extinguish, ambition; and with moral tribunals to which even the most despotic sovereigns were amenable. If wars of aggrandizement were undertaken, their authors were arraigncd in the face of Europe. If acts of internal tyranny were perpetrated, they resounded from a thousand presses throughout all civilized countries. Princes, on whose will there were no legal checks, thus found a moral restraint which the most powerful of them could not brave with absolute impunity. They acted before a vast au-

dience, to whose applause or condemnation they could not be utterly indifferent. The very constitution of human nature, the unalterable laws of the mind of man, against which all rebellion is fruitless, subjected the proudest tyrants to this control. No elevation of power, no depravity however consummate, no innocence however spotless, can render man wholly independent of the praise or blame of his fellow men.

One asylum of free discussion is still inviolate. There is still one spot in Europe where man can freely exercise his reason on the most important concerns of society, where he can boldly publish his judgment on the acts of the proudest and most powerful tyrants. The Press of England is still free. It is guarded by the free Constitution of our forefathers. It is guarded by the heart and arms of Englishmen, and I trust I may venture to say that if it be to fall, it will fall only under the ruins of the British Empire.

It is an awful consideration, gentlemen. Every other monument of European liberty has perished. That ancient fabric which has been gradually reared by the wisdom and virtue of our fathers still stands. It stands, thanks be to God! solid and entire; but it stands alone, and it stands amid ruins.

In these extraordinary circustances, I repeat that I must consider this as the first of a long series of conflicts between the greatest power in the world and the only free Press remaining in Europe. And I trust that you will consider

yourselves as the advanced guard of liberty, as having this day to fight the first battle of free discussion against the most formidable enemy that it ever encountered.

You already know that the general plan of Mr. Peltier's publication was to give a picture of the cabals and intrigues, of the hopes and projects, of French factions. It is undoubtedly a natural and necessary part of this plan to republish all the serious and ludicrous pieces which these factions circulate against each other. The ode ascribed to Chenier[1] or Ginguené[2] I do really believe to have been written at Paris, to have been circulated there, to have been there attributed to some one of these writers, to have been sent to England as their work, and as such to have been republished by Mr. Peltier. But I am not sure that I have evidence to convince you of the truth of this. Suppose that I have not; will my learned friend say that my client must necessarily be convicted? I, on the contrary, contend that it is for my learned friend to show that it is not an historical republication. Such it professes to be, and that profession it is for him to disprove. The profession may indeed be "a mask"; but it is for my friend to pluck off the mask, and expose the libeler, before he calls upon you for a verdict of guilty.

[1] André Marie de Chenier, the French poet, who was guillotined on July 25, 1794.

[2] Pierre Louis Ginguené, historian and critic.

If the general lawfulness of such republications be denied, then I must ask Mr. Attorney-General to account for the long impunity which English newspapers have enjoyed. I must request him to tell you why they have been suffered to republish all the atrocious official and unofficial libels which have been published against his majesty for the last ten years, by the Brissots, the Marats, the Dantons, the Robespierres, the Barères, the Talliens, the Reubells, the Merlins, the Barrases, and all that long line of bloody tyrants who oppressed their own country and insulted every other which they had not the power to rob. What must be the answer? That the English publishers were either innocent, if their motive was to gratify curiosity, or praiseworthy, if their intention was to rouse indignation against the calumniators of their country. If any other answer be made, I must remind my friend of a most sacred part of his duty—the duty of protecting the honest fame of those who are absent in the service of their country. Within these few days we have seen, in every newspaper in England, a publication, called the Report of Colonel Sebastiani[1] in which a gallant British officer [General Stuart] is charged with writing letters to procure assassination. The publishers of that infamous report are not, and will not be prosecuted, because their intention is not to libel General Stuart.

[1] Afterward one of Napoleon's marshals.

On any other principle, why have all our newspapers been suffered to circulate that most atrocious of all libels against the king and people of England, which purports to be translated from the *Moniteur* of the ninth of August, 1802,—a libel against a prince who has passed through a factious and stormy reign of forty-three years, without a single imputation on his personal character; against a people who have passed through the severest trials of national virtue with unimpaired glory—who alone in the world can boast of mutinies without murder, of triumphant mobs without massacre, of bloodless revolutions, and of civil wars unstained by a single assassination.

The French Revolution began with great and fatal errors. These errors produced atrocious crimes. A mild and feeble monarchy was succeeded by bloody anarchy, which very shortly gave birth to military despotism. France, in a few years, described the whole circle of human society.

All this was in the order of nature. When every principle of authority and civil discipline, when every principle which enables some men to command, and disposes others to obey, was extirpated from the mind by atrocious theories, and still more atrocious examples; when every old institution was trampled down with contumely, and every new institution covered in its cradle with blood; when the principle of property itself, the sheet-anchor of society, was an-

nihilated; when in the persons of the new possessors, whom the poverty of language obliges us to call proprietors, it was contaminated in its source by robbery and murder, and it became separated from that education and those manners, from that general presumption of superior knowledge and more scrupulous probity which form its only liberal titles to respect; when the people were taught to despise everything old, and compelled to detest everything new, there remained only one principle strong enough to hold society together—a principle utterly incompatible, indeed, with liberty and unfriendly to civilization itself, a tyrannical and barbarous principle, but in that miserable condition of human affairs, a refuge from still more intolerable evils. I mean the principle of military power which gains strength from that confusion and bloodshed in which all the other elements of society are dissolved, and which, in these terrible extremities, is the cement that preserves it from total destruction.

Under such circumstances, Bonaparte usurped the supreme power in France. I say *usurped,* because an illegal assumption of power is a usurpation. But usurpation, in its strongest moral sense, is scarcely applicable to a period of lawless and savage anarchy. The guilt of military usurpation, in truth, belongs to the author of those confusions which sooner or later give birth to such a usurpation.

It is, I know, not the spirit of the quiet and

submissive majority of the French people. They have always rather suffered than acted in the Revolution. Completely exhausted by the calamities through which they have passed, they yield to any power which gives them repose. There is, indeed, a degree of oppression which rouses men to resistance; but there is another and a greater, which wholly subdues and unmans them. It is remarkable that Robespierre himself was safe till he attacked his own accomplices. The spirit of men of virtue was broken, and there was no vigor of character left to destroy him, but in those daring ruffians who were the sharers of his tyranny.

As for the wretched populace who were made the blind and senseless instrument of so many crimes, whose frenzy can now be reviewed by a good mind with scarce any moral sentiment but that of compassion; that miserable multitude of beings, scarcely human, have already fallen into a brutish forgetfulness of the very atrocities which they themselves perpetrated. They have already forgotten all the acts of their drunken fury. If you ask one of them, Who destroyed that magnificent monument of religion and art? or who perpetrated that massacre? they stupidly answer, the Jacobins! tho he who gives the answer was probably one of these Jacobins himself; so that a traveler, ignorant of French history, might suppose the Jacobins to be the name of some Tartar horde who, after

laying waste France for ten years, were at last expelled by the native inhabitants. They have passed from senseless rage to stupid quiet. Their delirium is followed by lethargy.

In a word, gentlemen, the great body of the people of France have been severely trained in those convulsions and proscriptions which are the school of slavery. They are capable of no mutinous, and even of no bold and manly political sentiments. And if this ode professed to paint their opinions, it would be a most unfaithful picture. But it is otherwise with those who have been the actors and leaders in the scene of blood. It is otherwise with the numerous agents of the most indefatigable, searching, multiform, and omnipresent tyranny that ever existed, which pervaded every class of society, which had ministers and victims in every village in France.

Some of them, indeed, the basest of the race, the sophists, the rhetors, the poet-laureates of murder, who were cruel only from cowardice and calculating selfishness, are perfectly willing to transfer their venal pens to any government that does not disdain their infamous support. These men, Republican from servility, who published rhetorical panegyrics on massacre, and who reduced plunder to a system of ethics, are as ready to preach slavery as anarchy. But the more daring, I had almost said, the more respectable ruffians, can not so easily bend their

heads under the yoke. These fierce spirits have not lost

> "The unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate."

They leave the luxuries of servitude to the mean and dastardly hypocrites, to the Belials and Mammons of the infernal faction. They pursue their old end of tyranny under their old pretext of liberty. The recollection of their unbounded power renders every inferior condition irksome and vapid; and their former atrocities form, if I may so speak, a sort of moral destiny which irresistibly impels them to the perpetration of new crimes. They have no place left for penitence on earth. They labor under the most awful proscription of opinion that ever was pronounced against human beings. They have cut down every bridge by which they could retreat into the society of men.

Awakened from their dreams of democracy, the noise subsided that deafened their ears to the voice of humanity; the film fallen from their eyes which hid from them the blackness of their own deeds, haunted by the memory of their inexpiable guilt, condemned daily to look on the faces of those whom their hands made widows and orphans, they are goaded and scourged by these *real* furies, and hurried into the tumult of new crimes, which will drown the cries of remorse, or, if they be too depraved for remorse, will silence the curses of mankind. Tyrannical

power is their only refuge from the just vengeance of their fellow creatures. Murder is their only means of usurping power. They have no taste, no occupation, no pursuit but power and blood. If their hands are tied, they must at least have the luxury of murderous projects. They have drunk too deeply of human blood ever to relinquish their cannibal appetite.

Such a faction exists in France. It is numerous; it is powerful; and it has a principle of fidelity stronger than any that ever held together a society. *They are banded together by despair of forgiveness, by the unanimous detestation of mankind.* They are now contained by a severe and stern government. But they still meditate the renewal of insurrection and massacre; and they are prepared to renew the worst and most atrocious of their crimes, that crime against posterity and against human nature itself, that crime of which the latest generations of mankind may feel the fatal consequences—the crime of degrading and prostituting the sacred name of liberty.

I have used the word republican because it is the name by which this atrocious faction describes itself. The assumption of that name is one of their crimes. They are no more republicans than royalists. They are the common enemies of all human society. God forbid that by the use of that word I should be supposed to reflect on the members of those respectable republican communities which did

exist in Europe before the French Revolution. That Revolution has spared many monarchies, but it has spared no republic within the sphere of its destructive energy. One republic only now exists in the world—a republic of English blood, which was originally composed of republican societies, under the protection of a monarchy, which had, therefore, no great and perilous change in their internal constitution to effect; and of which, I speak it with pleasure and pride, the inhabitants, even in the convulsions of a most deplorable separation, displayed the humanity as well as valor which, I trust I may say, they inherited from their forefathers.

Believing, as I do, that we are on the eve of a great struggle, that this is only the first battle between reason and power, that you have now in your hands, committed to your trust, the only remains of free discussion in Europe, now confined to this kingdom; addressing you, therefore, as the guardians of the most important interests of mankind, convinced that the unfettered exercise of reason depends more on your present verdict than on any other that was ever delivered by a jury, I can not conclude without bringing before you the sentiments and examples of our ancestors in some of those awful and perilous situations by which divine Providence has in former ages tried the virtue of the English nation. We are fallen upon times in which it behooves us to strengthen our spirits by the contemplation of great examples of con-

stancy. Let us seek for them in the annals of our forefathers.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth may be considered as the opening of the modern history of England, especially in its connection with the modern system of Europe, which began about that time to assume the form that it preserved till the French revolution. It was a very memorable period, of which the maxims ought to be engraved on the head and heart of every Englishman. Philip II., at the head of the greatest empire in the world, was openly aiming at universal domination, and his project was so far from being thought chimerical by the wisest of his contemporaries that, in the opinion of the great Duke of Sully,[1] he must have been successful, "if, by a most singular combination of circumstances, he had not at the same time been resisted by two such strong heads as those of Henry IV. and Queen Elizabeth." To the most extensive and opulent dominions, the most numerous and disciplined armies, the most renowned captains, the greatest revenue, he added also the most formidable power over opinion. He was the chief of a religious faction, animated by the most atrocious fanaticism, prepared to second his ambition by rebellion, anarchy, and regicide in every Protestant state. Elizabeth was among the first objects of his hostility. That wise and magnanimous princess placed herself

[1] Minister of finance under Henry IV., 1597–1610.

in the front of the battle for the liberties of Europe. Tho she had to contend at home with his fanatical faction, which almost occupied Ireland, which divided Scotland, and was not of contemptible strength in England, she aided the oppressed inhabitants of the Netherlands in their just and glorious resistance to his tyranny; she aided Henry the Great in suppressing the abominable rebellion which anarchical principles had excited and Spanish arms had supported in France; and after a long reign of various fortune, in which she preserved her unconquered spirit through great calamities and still greater dangers, she at length broke the strength of the enemy, and reduced his power within such limits as to be compatible with the safety of England and of all Europe.

Her only effectual ally was the spirit of her people, and her policy flowed from that magnanimous nature which in the hour of peril teaches better lessons than those of cold reason. Her great heart inspired her with a higher and a nobler wisdom, which disdained to appeal to the low and sordid passions of her people even for the protection of their low and sordid interests, because she knew, or rather, she felt, that these are effeminate, creeping, cowardly, short-sighted passions, which shrink from conflict even in defense of their own mean objects. In a righteous cause, she roused those generous affections of her people which alone teach boldness, constancy, and foresight, and which are there-

fore the only safe guardians of the lowest as well as the highest interests of a nation. In her memorable address to her army, when the invasion of the kingdom was threatened by Spain, this woman of heroic spirit disdained to speak to them of their ease and their commerce, and their wealth and their safety.

No! She touched another chord—she spoke of their national honor, of their dignity as Englishmen, of "the foul scorn that Parma or Spain *should dare* to invade the borders of her realms." She breathed into them those grand and powerful sentiments which exalt vulgar men into heroes, which led them into the battle of their country, armed with holy and irresistible enthusiasm; which even cover with their shield all the ignoble interests that base calculation and cowardly selfishness tremble to hazard, but shrink from defending. A sort of prophetic instinct, if I may so speak, seems to have revealed to her the importance of that great instrument for rousing and guiding the minds of men, of the effects of which she had no experience, which, since her time, has changed the condition of the world, but which few modern statesmen have thoroughly understood or wisely employed; which is, no doubt, connected with many ridiculous and degrading details, which has produced, and which may again produce, terrible mischiefs, but of which the influence must, after all, be considered as the most certain effect and the most efficacious cause of civili-

zation, and which, whether it be a blessing or a curse, is the most powerful engine that a politician can move—I mean the Press. It is a curious fact that in the year of the Armada, Queen Elizabeth caused to be printed the first gazettes that ever appeared in England; and I own, when I consider that this mode of rousing a national spirit was then absolutely unexampled, that she could have no assurance of its efficacy from the precedents of former times, I am disposed to regard her having recourse to it as one of the most sagacious experiments, one of the greatest discoveries of political genius, one of the most striking anticipations of future experience that we find in history. I mention it to you to justify the opinion that I have ventured to state of the close connection of our national spirit with our Press—even our periodical Press.

The next great conspirator against the rights of men and of nations, against the security and independence of all European states, against every kind and degree of civil and religious liberty, was Louis XIV. In his time the character of the English nation was the more remarkably displayed, because it was counteracted by an apostate and perfidious government. During a great part of his reign, you know that the throne of England was filled by princes who deserted the cause of their country and of Europe, who were the accomplices and the tools of the oppressor of the world, who were even

so unmanly, so unprincely, so base, as to have sold themselves to his ambition; who were content that he should enslave the continent, if he enabled them to enslave Great Britain. These princes,[1] traitors to their own royal dignity and to the feelings of the generous people whom they ruled, preferred the condition of the first slave of Louis XIV. to the dignity of the first freemen of England; yet even under these princes, the feelings of the people of this kingdom were displayed, on a most memorable occasion, toward foreign sufferers and foreign oppressors.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes threw fifty thousand French Protestants on our shores. They were received as I trust the victims of tyranny ever will be in this land, which seems chosen by Providence to be the home of the exile, the refuge of the oppressed. They were welcomed by a people high-spirited as well as humane, who did not insult them by clandestine charity; who did not give alms in secret lest their charity should be detected by the neighboring tyrants! No! They were publicly and nationally welcomed and relieved. They were bid to raise their voice against their oppressor, and to proclaim their wrongs to all mankind. They did so. They were joined in the cry of just indignation by every Englishman worthy of the name. It was a fruitful indignation, which soon produced the successful resistance of

[1] Charles II. and James II.

Europe to the common enemy. Even then, when Jeffreys disgraced the bench which his lordship [Lord Ellenborough] now adorns, no refugee was deterred by prosecution for libel from giving vent to his feelings, from arraigning the oppressor in the face of all Europe.

During this ignominious period of our history, a war arose on the continent, which can not but present itself to the mind on such an occasion as this; the only war that was ever made on the avowed ground of attacking a free Press. I speak of the invasion of Holland by Louis XIV. The liberties which the Dutch gazettes had taken in discussing his conduct were the sole cause of this very extraordinary and memorable war, which was of short duration, unprecedented in its avowed principle, and most glorious in its event for the liberties of mankind. That republic, at all times so interesting to Englishmen —in the worst times of both countries our brave enemies; in their best times our most faithful and valuable friends—was then charged with the defense of a free Press against the oppressor of Europe, as a sacred trust for the benefit of all generations. They felt the sacredness of the deposit, they felt the dignity of the station in which they were placed, and tho deserted by the unEnglish government of England, they asserted their own ancient character, and drove out the great armies and great captains of the oppressor with defeat and disgrace. Such was the result of the only war hitherto avowedly

undertaken to oppress a free country because she allowed the free and public exercise of reason. And may the God of justice and liberty grant that such may ever be the result of wars made by tyrants against the rights of mankind, especially that which is the guardian of every other!

This war, gentlemen, had the effect of raising up from obscurity the great Prince of Orange, afterward King William III., the deliverer of Holland, the deliverer of England, the deliverer of Europe; the only hero who was distinguished by such a happy union of fortune and virtue that the objects of his ambition were always the same with the interests of humanity; perhaps the only man who devoted the whole of his life exclusively to the service of mankind. This most illustrious benefactor of Europe, this "hero without vanity or passion," as he has been justly and beautifully called by a venerable prelate [Doctor Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph], who never made a step toward greatness without securing or advancing liberty, who had been made Stadtholder of Holland for the salvation of his own country, was soon after made king of England for the deliverance of ours.

In the course of the eighteenth century, a great change took place in the state of political discussion in this country. I speak of the multiplication of newspapers. I know that newspapers are not very popular in this place, which is, indeed, not very surprising, because they are known here only by their faults. Their pub-

lishers come here only to receive the chastisement due to their offenses. With all their faults, I own I can not help feeling some respect for whatever is a proof of the increased curiosity and increased knowledge of mankind; and I can not help thinking that if somewhat more indulgence and consideration were shown for the difficulties of their situation, it might prove one of the best correctives of their faults, by teaching them that self-respect which is the best security for liberal conduct toward others. But however that may be, it is very certain that the multiplication of these channels of popular information has produced a great change in the state of our domestic and foreign politics. At home, it has, in truth, produced a gradual revolution in our government. By increasing the number of those who exercise some sort of judgment on public affairs, it has created a substantial democracy, infinitely more important than those democratical forms which have been the subject of so much contest. So that I may venture to say, England has not only in its forms the most democratical government that ever existed in a great country, but in substance has the most democratical government that ever existed in any country; if the most *substantial* democracy be that state in which the greatest number of men feel an interest and express an opinion upon political questions, and in which the greatest number of judgments and wills concur in influencing public measures.

The first remarkable instance which I shall choose to state of the unpunished and protected boldness of the English Press, of the freedom with which they animadverted on the policy of powerful sovereigns, is the partition of Poland in 1772; an act not, perhaps, so horrible in its means, nor so deplorable in its immediate effects, as some other atrocious invasions of national independence which have followed it, but the most abominable in its general tendency and ultimate consequences of any political crime recorded in history, because it was the first practical breach in the system of Europe, the first example of atrocious robbery perpetrated on unoffending countries which have been since so liberally followed, and which has broken down all the barriers of habit and principle which guarded defenseless states. The perpetrators of this atrocious crime were the most powerful sovereigns of the continent, whose hostility it certainly was not the interest of Great Britain wantonly to incur. They were the most illustrious princes of their age, and some of them were, doubtless, entitled to the highest praise for their domestic administration, as well as for the brilliant qualities which distinguished their characters. But none of these circumstances, no dread of their resentment, no admiration of their talents, no consideration of their rank, silenced the animadversion of the English Press.

Some of you remember, all of you know, that a loud and unanimous cry of reprobation and

execration broke out against them from every part of this kingdom. It was perfectly uninfluenced by any considerations of our own mere national interest, which might perhaps be supposed to be rather favorably affected by that partition. It was not, as in some other countries, the indignation of rival robbers, who were excluded from their share of the prey. It was the moral anger of disinterested spectators against atrocious crimes, the gravest and the most dignified moral principle which the God of justice has implanted in the human heart; that of which the dread is the only restraint on the actions of powerful criminals, and of which the promulgation is the only punishment than can be inflicted on them. It is a restraint which ought not to be weakened. It is a punishment which no good man can desire to mitigate.

Soon after, gentlemen, there followed an act, in comparison with which all the deeds of rapine and blood perpetrated in the world are innocence itself—the invasion and destruction of Switzerland, that unparalleled scene of guilt and enormity; that unprovoked aggression against an innocent country, which has been the sanctuary of peace and liberty for three centuries; respected as a sort of sacred territory by the fiercest ambition; raised, like its own mountains, beyond the region of the storms which raged around on every side; the only warlike people that never sent forth armies to disturb their neighbors; the only government

that ever accumulated treasures without imposing taxes; an innocent treasure, unstained by the tears of the poor; the inviolate patrimony of the commonwealth, which attested the virtue of a long series of magistrates, but which at length caught the eye of the spoiler, and became the fatal occasion of their ruin! Gentlemen, the destruction of such a country, "its cause so innocent, and its fortune so lamentable!" made a deep impression on the people of England. I will ask my learned friend, if we had then been at peace with the French Republic whether we must have been silent spectators of the foulest crimes that ever blotted the name of humanity! whether we must, like cowards and slaves, have repressed the compassion and indignation with which that horrible scene of tyranny had filled our hearts?

When Robespierre, in the debates in the National Convention on the mode of murdering their blameless sovereign, objected to the formal and tedious mode of murder called a trial, and proposed to put him immediately to death, "on the principles of insurrection," because, to doubt the guilt of the king would be to doubt the innocence of the Convention, and if the king were not a traitor, the Convention must be rebels; would my learned friend have had an English writer state all this with *"decorum and moderation?"* Would he have had an English writer state that tho this reasoning was not perfectly agreeable to our national laws, or per-

haps to our national prejudices, yet it was not for him to make any observations on the judicial proceedings of foreign states?

When Marat, in the same Convention, called for two hundred and seventy thousand heads, must our English writers have said that the remedy did, indeed, seem to their weak judgment rather severe; but that it was not for them to judge the conduct of so illustrious an assembly as the National Convention, or the suggestions of so enlightened a statesman as M. Marat?

Mortifying and horrible as the idea is, I must remind you, gentlemen, that even at that time, even under the reign of Robespierre, my learned friend, if he had then been attorney-general, might have been compelled by some most deplorable necessity to have come into this court to ask your verdict against the libelers of Barère and Collot d'Herbois. Mr. Peltier then employed his talents against the enemies of the human race, as he has uniformly and bravely done. I do not believe that any peace, any political considerations, any fear of punishment would have silenced him. He has shown too much honor, and constancy, and intrepidity, to be shaken by such circumstances as these.

My learned friend might then have been compelled to have filed a criminal information against Mr. Peltier, for "wickedly and maliciously intending to vilify and degrade Maximilian Robespierre, President of the Committee of Public Safety of the French Republic!" He

might have been reduced to the sad necessity of appearing before you to belie his own better feelings, to prosecute Mr. Peltier for publishing those sentiments which my friend himself had a thousand times felt, and a thousand times expressed. He might have been obliged even to call for punishment upon Mr. Peltier for language which he and all mankind would for ever despise Mr. Peltier if he were not to employ. Then, indeed, gentlemen, we should have seen the last humiliation fall on England; the tribunals, the spotless and venerable tribunals, of this free country reduced to be the ministers of the vengeance of Robespierre! What could have rescued us from this last disgrace? *The honesty and courage of a jury.* They would have delivered the judges of this country from the dire necessity of inflicting punishment on a brave and virtuous man, because he spoke truth of a monster. They would have despised the threats of a foreign tyrant, as their ancestors braved the power of oppression at home.

Gentlemen, I now leave this unfortunate gentleman in your hands. His character and his situation might interest your humanity; but, on his behalf, I only ask justice from you. I only ask a favorable construction of what can not be said to be more than ambiguous language, and this you will soon be told, from the highest authority, is a part of justice.

CHALMERS

WHEN OLD THINGS PASS AWAY[1]

Born in 1780, died in 1847; Minister at Glasgow 1815–1832; Professor at St. Andrews 1823–1828, at Edinburgh 1828–1843; Leader of the secession from the Church of Scotland in 1843.

Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world, and that, when he looked toward it, he saw abundance smiling upon every field, with all the blessings which earth can afford scattered in profusion throughout every family, with the light of the sun sweetly resting upon all the pleasant habitations, and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society—conceive this to be the general character of the scene upon one side of his contemplation, and that on the other, beyond the verge of the goodly planet on which he was situated, he could descry nothing but a dark and fathomless unknown.

Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it? Would he leave its peopled dwelling-places and become

[1] From a discourse entitled, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."

a solitary wanderer through the fields of nonentity? If space offered him nothing but a wilderness, would he for it abandon the home-bred scenes of life and of cheerfulness that lay so near and exerted such a power of urgency to detain him? Would not he cling to the regions of sense and of life and of society?—and shrinking away from the desolation that was beyond it, would not he be glad to keep his firm footing on the territory of this world and to take shelter under the silver canopy that was stretched over it?

But if, during the time of his contemplation, some happy island of the blest had floated by, and there had burst upon his senses the light of its surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody, and he clearly saw that there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heartfelt joy spread itself among all the families, and he could discern there a peace and piety and a benevolence which put moral gladness into every bosom, and united the whole society in one rejoicing sympathy with each other and with the beneficent Father of them all; could he further see that pain and mortality were there unknown, and, above all, that signals of welcome were hung out, and an avenue of communication was made for him—perceive you not that what was before the wilderness would become the land of invitation, and what now the world would be the wilderness?

What unpeopled space could not do can be

done by space teeming with beatific scenes and beatific society.

And let the existing tendencies of the heart be what they may to the scene that is near and visible around us, still if another stood revealed to the prospect of man, either through the channel of faith, or through the channel of his senses, then, without violence done to the constitution of his moral nature, may he die unto the present world, and live to the lovelier world that stands in the distance away from it.

CANNING

ON GRANTING AID TO PORTUGAL[1]

(1826)

Born in 1770, died in 1827; elected to Parliament in 1794; Foreign Secretary in 1807–09; President of the Board of Control in 1816–20; Foreign Secretary in 1822–27; Prime Minister in 1827.

AMONG the alliances by which, at different periods of our history, this country has been connected with the other nations of Europe, none is so ancient in origin, and so precise in obligation—none has continued so long, and been observed so faithfully—of none is the memory so intimately interwoven with the most brilliant records of our triumphs, as that by which Great Britain is connected with Portugal. It dates back to distant centuries; it has survived an endless variety of fortunes. Anterior in existence to the accession of the House of Braganza to the throne of Portugal—it derived, however, fresh vigor from that event; and never from that epoch to the present hour, has the independent monarchy of Portugal ceased to be nur-

[1] Delivered in the House of Commons in December, 1826, after an organization of Portuguese favoring absolutism had prepared in Spain an expedition to overthrow the existing constitutional monarchy in Portugal. Abridged. Only a few years before this event, trouble in the Spanish Peninsula had led Canning as foreign minister to a line of policy which he described in famous words as "calling the new world into existence to adjust the balance of the old."

tured by the friendship of Great Britain. This alliance has never been seriously interrupted, but it has been renewed by repeated sanctions. It has been maintained under difficulties by which the fidelity of other alliances was shaken, and has been vindicated in fields of blood and of glory.

That the alliance with Portugal has been always unqualifiedly advantageous to this country—that it has not been sometimes inconvenient and sometimes burdensome—I am not bound nor prepared to maintain. But no British statesman, so far as I know, has ever suggested the expediency of shaking it off; and it is assuredly not a moment of need that honor and what I may be allowed to call national sympathy would permit us to weigh, with an overscrupulous exactness, the amount of difficulties and dangers attendant upon its faithful and steadfast observance. What feelings of national honor would forbid, is forbidden alike by the plain dictates of national faith.

It is not at distant periods of history, and in bygone ages only, that the traces of the union between Great Britain and Portugal are to be found. In the last compact of modern Europe, the compact which forms the basis of its present international law—I mean the treaty of Vienna of 1815[1]—this country, with its eyes open to the

[1] The treaty which arranged the affairs of Europe after Napoleon's overthrow at Waterloo.

possible inconveniences of the connection, but with a memory awake to its past benefits, solemnly renewed the previously existing obligations of alliance and amity with Portugal.

In order to appreciate the force of this stipulation—recent in point of time, recent, also, in the sanction of Parliament—the House will, perhaps, allow me to explain shortly the circumstances in reference to which it was contracted. In the year 1807, when, upon the declaration of Bonaparte that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign, the King of Portugal, by the advice of Great Britain, was induced to set sail for the Brazils; almost at the very moment of his most faithful majesty's embarkation, a secret convention[1] was signed between his majesty and the king of Portugal, stipulating that, in the event of his most faithful majesty's establishing the seat of his government in Brazil, Great Britain would never acknowledge any other dynasty than that of the House of Braganza on the throne of Portugal. That convention, I say, was contemporaneous with the migration to the Brazils—a step of great importance at the time, as removing from the grasp of Bonaparte the sovereign family of Braganza. Afterward, in the year 1810, when the seat of the king of Portugal's government was established at Rio de Janeiro, and when it seemed probable, in the then apparently hopeless condition of the affairs

[1] The Convention of Cintra, August 30, 1808.

of Europe, that it was likely long to continue there, the secret convention of 1807, of which the main object was accomplished by the fact of the emigration to Brazil, was abrogated, and a new and public treaty was concluded, into which was transferred the stipulation of 1807, binding Great Britain, so long as his faithful majesty should be compelled to reside in Brazil, not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza. That stipulation, which had hitherto been *secret*, thus became *patent*, and part of the known law of nations.

In the year 1814, in consequence of the happy conclusion of the war, the option was afforded to the king of Portugal of returning to his European dominions. It was then felt that, as the necessity of his most faithful majesty's absence from Portugal had ceased, the ground for the obligation originally contracted in the secret convention of 1807, and afterward transferred to the patent treaty of 1810, was removed. The treaty of 1810 was, therefore, annulled at the Congress of Vienna; and in lieu of the stipulation not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza, was substituted that which I have just read to the House.

Annulling the treaty of 1810, the treaty of Vienna renews and confirms (as the House will have seen) all *former* treaties between Great Britain and Portugal, describing them as "an-

cient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee''; as having ''long and happily subsisted between the two Crowns''; and as being allowed, by the two high contracting parties, to remain ''in full force and effect.''

What, then, is the force—what is the effect of those ancient treaties? I am prepared to show to the House what it is. But before I do so, I must say, that if all the treaties to which this article of the treaty of Vienna refers, had perished by some convulsion of nature, or had by some extraordinary accident been consigned to total oblivion, still it would be impossible not to admit, as an incontestable inference from this article of the treaty of Vienna alone, that, in a moral point of view, there is incumbent on Great Britain a decided obligation to act as the effectual defender of Portugal. If I could not show the letter of a single antecedent stipulation, I should still contend that a solemn admission, only ten years old, of the existence at that time of ''treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee,'' held Great Britain to the discharge of the obligations which that very description implies. But fortunately there is no such difficulty in specifying the nature of those obligations. All of the preceding treaties exist—all of them are of easy reference—all of them are known to this country, to Spain, to every nation of the civilized world.

This, sir, being the state, morally and politically, of our obligations toward Portugal, it is

obvious that when Portugal, in apprehension of the coming storm, called on Great Britain for assistance, the only hesitation on our part could be, not whether that assistance was due, supposing the occasion for demanding it to arise, but simply whether that occasion—in other words, whether the *casus foederis*—had arisen.

The main question, however, is this: Was it obligatory upon us to comply with that requisition? In other words, had the *casus foederis* arisen? In our opinion it had. Bands of Portuguese rebels, armed, equipped, and trained in Spain, had crossed the Spanish frontier, carrying terror and devastation into their own country, and proclaiming sometimes the brother of the reigning sovereign of Portugal, sometimes a Spanish princess, and sometimes even Ferdinand of Spain, as the rightful occupant of the Portuguese throne. These rebels crossed the frontier, not at one point only, but at several points; for it is remarkable that the aggression, on which the original application to Great Britain for succor was founded, is not the aggression with reference to which that application has been complied with.

If a single company of *Spanish* soldiers had crossed the frontier in hostile array, there could not, it is presumed, be a doubt as to the character of that invasion. Shall bodies of men, armed, clothed, and regimented by Spain, carry fire and sword into the bosom of her unoffending neighbor, and shall it be pretended that no at-

tack, no invasion has taken place, because, forsooth, these outrages are committed against Portugal by men to whom Portugal had given birth and nurture? What petty quibbling would it be to say that an invasion of Portugal from Spain was not a *Spanish* invasion, because Spain did not employ her own troops, but hired mercenaries to effect her purpose? And what difference is it, except as an aggravation, that the mercenaries in this instance were natives of Portugal.

I have already stated, and now repeat, that it never has been the wish or the pretension of the British government to interfere in the internal concerns of the Portuguese nation. Questions of that kind the Portuguese nation must settle among themselves. But if we were to admit that hordes of traitorous refugees from Portugal, with Spanish arms, or arms furnished or restored to them by Spanish authorities, in their hands, might put off their country for one purpose, and put it on again for another—put it off for the purpose of attack, and put it on again for the purpose of impunity—if, I say, we were to admit this juggle, and either pretend to be deceived by it ourselves, or attempt to deceive Portugal, into a belief that there was nothing of external attack, nothing of foreign hostility, in such a system of aggression—such pretense and attempt would, perhaps, be only ridiculous and contemptible, if they did not require a much more serious character from being employed as an excuse for infidelity to an-

cient friendship, and as a pretext for getting rid of the positive stipulations of treaties.

This, then, is the case which I lay before the House of Commons. Here is, on the one hand, an undoubted pledge of national faith—not taken in a corner, not kept secret between the parties, but publicly recorded among the annals of history, in the face of the world. Here are, on the other hand, undeniable acts of foreign aggression, perpetrated, indeed, principally through the instrumentality of domestic traitors, but supported with foreign means, instigated by foreign councils, and directed to foreign ends. Putting these facts and this pledge together, it is impossible that his majesty should refuse the call that has been made upon him; nor can Parliament, I am convinced, refuse to enable his majesty to fulfil his undoubted obligations. I am willing to rest the whole question of to-night, and to call for the vote of the House of Commons upon this simple case, divested altogether of collateral circumstances; from which I especially wish to separate it, in the minds of those who hear me, and also in the minds of others, to whom what I now say will find its way. If I were to sit down this moment, without adding another word, I have no doubt but that I should have the concurrence of the House in the address which I mean to propose.

When I state this, it will be obvious to the House that the vote for which I am about to call upon them is a vote for the defense of Por-

tugal, not a vote for war against Spain. I beg the House to keep these two points entirely distinct in their consideration. For the former I think I have said enough. If, in what I have now further to say, I should bear hard upon the Spanish government, I beg that it may be observed, that, unjustifiable as I shall show their conduct to have been—contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the law of good neighborhood, contrary, I might say, to the laws of God and man—with respect to Portugal, still I do not mean to preclude a *locus poenitentiae,* a possibility of redress and reparation. It is our duty to fly to the defense of Portugal, be the assailant who he may. And, be it remembered, that, in thus fulfilling the stipulation of ancient treaties, of the existence and obligation of which all the world are aware, we, according to the universally admitted construction of the law of nations, neither make war upon that assailant, nor give to that assailant, much less to any other power, just cause of war against ourselves.

Sir, I set out with saying that there were reasons which entirely satisfied my judgment that nothing short of a point of national faith or national honor would justify, at the present moment, any voluntary approximation to the possibility of war. Let me be understood, however, distinctly as not meaning to say that I dread war in a good cause (and in no other way may it be the lot of this country ever to engage!) from a distrust of the strength of the country to

commence it, or of her resources to maintain it. I dread it, indeed—but upon far other grounds: I dread it from an apprehension of the tremendous consequences which might arise from any hostilities in which we might now be engaged.

Some years ago, in the discussion of the negotiations respecting the French war against Spain, I took the liberty of adverting to this topic. I then stated that the position of this country in the present state of the world was one of neutrality, not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles; and that it was by neutrality alone that we could maintain that balance, the preservation of which I believed to be essential to the welfare of mankind. I then said that I feared that the next war which should be kindled in Europe would be a war not so much of armies as of opinions. Not four years have elapsed, and behold my apprehension realized! It is, to be sure, within narrow limits that this war of opinion is at present confined; but it *is* a war of opinion that Spain (whether as government or as nation) is now waging against Portugal; it is a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. How long is it reasonable to expect that Portugal will abstain from retaliation? If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate—and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, not in the more fatal conflict of opinions.

The consequence of letting loose the passions at present chained and confined, would be to produce a scene of desolation which no man can contemplate without horror; and I should not sleep easy on my couch if I were conscious that I had contributed to precipitate it by a single moment.

This, then, is the reason—a reason very different from fear, the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe; why I would bear much, and would forbear long; why I would (as I have said) put up with almost anything that did not touch national faith and national honor, rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands—not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges; and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no further.

I return, in conclusion, to the object of the address. Let us fly to the aid of Portugal, by whomsoever attacked, because it is our duty to do so; and let us cease our interference where that duty ends. We go to Portugal not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions, but to defend and to preserve the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well-known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come.

MACAULAY

ON THE REFORM BILL[1]

(1831)

Born in 1800, died in 1859; called to the Bar in 1826; Member of Parliament in 1830–34; Member of the Supreme Council in India in 1834–38; Secretary of War in 1839–41; Paymaster-General in 1846–47; elected to Parliament in 1852; made a Peer in 1857.

It is a circumstance, sir, of happy augury for the motion before the House, that almost all those who have opposed it have declared themselves hostile on principle to parliamentary reform. Two members, I think, have confessed that, tho they disapprove of the plan[2] now submitted to us, they are forced to admit the necessity of a change in the representative system. Yet even those gentlemen have used, as far as I have observed, no arguments which would not apply as strongly to the most moderate change as to that which has been proposed by his majesty's government.

The honorable baronet who has just sat down [Sir Robert Peel] has told us that the ministers

[1] Delivered in the House of Commons March 1, 1831. Abridged. This speech was the first of Macaulay's successes. It led to an invitation to Holland House, to a breakfast with Rogers and to introductions to Sidney Smith, Thomas Moore, Henry Hallam, and many other literary celebrities of the period.

[2] The Reform Bill, passed in 1832, disfranchised many rotten boroughs and enlarged the number of holders of the franchise.

have attempted to unite two inconsistent principles in one abortive measure. Those were his very words. He thinks, if I understand him rightly, that we ought either to leave the representative system such as it is, or to make it perfectly symmetrical. I think, sir, that the ministers would have acted unwisely if they had taken either course. Their principle is plain, rational, and consistent. It is this: to admit the middle class to a large and direct share in the representation, without any violent shock to the institutions of our country. [Hear! hear!] I understand those cheers; but surely the gentlemen who utter them will allow that the change which will be made in our institutions by this bill is far less violent than that which, according to the honorable baronet, ought to be made if we make any reform at all. I praise the ministers for not attempting, at the present time, to make the representation uniform. I praise them for not effacing the old distinction between the towns and the counties, and for not assigning members to districts, according to the American practise, by the Rule of Three. The government has, in my opinion, done all that was necessary for the removal of a great practical evil, and no more than was necessary.

I consider this, sir, as a practical question. I rest my opinion on no general theory of government. I distrust all general theories of government. I will not positively say that there is

any form of polity which may not, in some conceivable circumstances, be the best possible. I believe that there are societies in which every man may safely be admitted to vote. [Hear! hear!] Gentlemen may cheer, but such is my opinion. I say, sir, that there are countries in which the condition of the laboring classes is such that they may safely be entrusted with the right of electing members of the legislature. If the laborers of England were in that state in which I, from my soul, wish to see them; if employment were always plentiful, wages always high, food always cheap; if a large family were considered not as an encumbrance but as a blessing, the principal objections to universal suffrage would, I think, be removed.

Universal suffrage exists in the United States without producing any very frightful consequences; and I do not believe that the people of those States, or of any part of the world, are in any good quality naturally superior to our own countrymen. But, unhappily, the laboring classes in England, and in all old countries, are occasionally in a state of great distress. Some of the causes of this distress are, I fear, beyond the control of the government. We know what effect distress produces, even on people more intelligent than the great body of the laboring classes can possibly be. We know that it makes even wise men irritable, unreasonable, credulous, eager for immediate relief, heedless of remote consequences. There is no quackery in medi-

cine, religion, or politics, which may not impose even on a powerful mind, when that mind has been disordered by pain or fear. It is therefore no reflection on the poorer class of Englishmen, who are not, and who can not in the nature of things be, highly educated, to say that distress produces on them its natural effects, those effects which it would produce on the Americans, or on any other people; that it blinds their judgment, that it inflames their passions, that it makes them prone to believe those who flatter them, and to distrust those who would serve them. For the sake, therefore, of the whole society—for the sake of the laboring classes themselves—I hold it to be clearly expedient that, in a country like this, the right of suffrage should depend on a pecuniary qualification.

But, sir, every argument which would induce me to oppose universal suffrage induces me to support the plan which is now before us. I am opposed to universal suffrage, because I think that it would produce a destructive revolution. I support this plan, because I am sure that it is our best security against a revolution. The noble paymaster of the forces hinted, delicately indeed and remotely, at this subject. He spoke of the danger of disappointing the expectations of the nation; and for this he was charged with threatening the House. Sir, in the year 1817, the late Lord Londonderry proposed a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. On that occasion he told the House that, unless the measures which

he recommended were adopted, the public peace could not be preserved. Was he accused of threatening the House? Again, in the year 1819, he proposed the laws known by the name of the Six Acts. He then told the House that, unless the executive power were reinforced, all the institutions of the country would be overturned by popular violence. Was he then accused of threatening the House? Will any gentleman say that it is parliamentary and decorous to urge the danger arising from popular discontent as an argument for severity; but that it is unparliamentary and indecorous to urge that same danger as an argument for conciliation?

I, sir, do entertain great apprehension for the fate of my country; I do in my conscience believe that, unless the plan proposed, or some similar plan, be speedily adopted, great and terrible calamities will befall us. Entertaining this opinion, I think myself bound to state it, not as a threat, but as a reason. I support this bill because it will improve our institutions; but I support it also because it tends to preserve them.

If it be said that there is an evil in change as change, I answer that there is also an evil in discontent as discontent. This, indeed, is the strongest part of our case. It is said that the system works well. I deny it. I deny that a system works well which the people regard with aversion. We may say here that it is a good system and a perfect system. But if any man

were to say so to any six hundred and fifty-eight respectable farmers or shopkeepers, chosen by lot in any part of England, he would be hooted down and laughed to scorn. Are these the feelings with which any part of the government ought to be regarded? Above all, are these the feelings with which the popular branch of the legislature ought to be regarded?

It is almost as essential to the utility of a House of Commons that it should possess the confidence of the people, as that it should deserve that confidence. Unfortunately, that which is in theory the popular part of our government, is in practise the unpopular part. Who wishes to dethrone the king? Who wishes to turn the lords out of their House? Here and there a crazy radical, whom the boys in the street point at as he walks along. Who wishes to alter the constitution of this House? The whole people. It is natural that it should be so. The House of Commons is, in the language of Mr. Burke, a check, not on the people, but for the people. While that check is efficient, there is no reason to fear that the king or the nobles will oppress the people. But if that check requires checking, how is it to be checked? If the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall we season it? The distrust with which the nation regards this House may be unjust. But what then? Can you remove that distrust? That it exists can not be denied. That it is an evil can not be denied. That it is an increasing evil can not be denied.

One gentleman tells us that it has been produced by the late events in France and Belgium; another, that it is the effect of seditious works which have lately been published. If this feeling be of origin so recent, I have read history to little purpose.

Sir, this alarming discontent is not the growth of a day, or of a year. If there be any symptoms by which it is possible to distinguish the chronic diseases of the body politic from its passing inflammations, all those symptoms exist in the present case. The taint has been gradually becoming more extensive and more malignant, through the whole lifetime of two generations. We have tried anodynes. We have tried cruel operations. What are we to try now? Who flatters himself that he can turn this feeling back? Does there remain any argument which escaped the comprehensive intellect of Mr. Burke, or the subtlety of Mr. Windham? Does there remain any species of coercion which was not tried by Mr. Pitt and by Lord Londonderry? We have had laws. We have had blood. New treasons have been created. The Press has been shackled. The Habeas Corpus Act has been suspended. Public meetings have been prohibited. The event has proved that these expedients were mere palliatives. You are at the end of your palliatives. The evil remains. It is more formidable than ever. What is to be done?

Under such circumstances, a great plan of reconciliation, prepared by the ministers of the

Crown, has been brought before us in a manner which gives additional luster to a noble name, inseparably associated during two centuries with the dearest liberties of the English people. I will not say that this plan is in all its details precisely such as I might wish it to be; but it is founded on a great and a sound principle. It takes away a vast power from a few. It distributes that power through the great mass of the middle order. Every man, therefore, who thinks as I think, is bound to stand firmly by ministers who are resolved to stand or fall with this measure. Were I one of them, I would sooner, infinitely sooner, fall with such a measure than stand by any other means that ever supported a cabinet.

My honorable friend, the member for the University of Oxford [Sir Robert Inglis] tells us that if we pass this law England will soon be a republic. The reformed House of Commons will, according to him, before it has sat ten years, depose the king and expel the lords from their House. Sir, if my honorable friend could prove this, he would have succeeded in bringing an argument for democracy infinitely stronger than any that is to be found in the works of Paine. My honorable friend's proposition is in fact this: that our monarchical and aristocratical institutions have no hold on the public mind of England; that these institutions are regarded with aversion by a decided majority of the middle class. This, sir, I say, is plainly deducible from

his proposition; for he tells us that the representatives of the middle class will inevitably abolish royalty and nobility within ten years; and there is surely no reason to think that the representatives of the middle class will be more inclined to a democratic revolution than their constituents. Now, sir, if I were convinced that the great body of the middle class in England look with aversion on monarchy and aristocracy, I should be forced, much against my will, to come to this conclusion that monarchical and aristocratical institutions are unsuited to my country. Monarchy and aristocracy, valuable and useful as I think them, are still valuable and useful as means and not as ends. The end of government is the happiness of the people, and I do not conceive that, in a country like this, the happiness of the people can be promoted by a form of government in which the middle classes place no confidence, and which exists only because the middle classes have no organ by which to make their sentiments known. But, sir, I am fully convinced that the middle classes sincerely wish to uphold the royal prerogatives and the constitutional rights of the peers.

The question of parliamentary reform is still behind. But signs, of which it is impossible to misconceive the import, do most clearly indicate that, unless that question also be speedily settled, property, and order, and all the institutions of this great monarchy, will be exposed to fearful peril. Is it possible that gentlemen long versed

in high political affairs can not read these signs? Is it possible that they can really believe that the representative system of England, such as it now is, will last till the year 1860? If not, for what would they have us wait? Would they have us wait merely that we may show to all the world how little we have profited by our own recent experience?

Would they have us wait, that we may once again hit the exact point where we can neither refuse with authority nor concede with grace? Would they have us wait, that the numbers of the discontented party may become larger, its demands higher, its feelings more acrimonious, its organization more complete? Would they have us wait till the whole tragicomedy of 1827 has been acted over again; till they have been brought into office by a cry of "No Reform," to be reformers, as they were once before brought into office by a cry of "No Popery," to be emancipators? Have they obliterated from their minds—gladly, perhaps, would some among them obliterate from their minds—the transactions of that year? And have they forgotten all the transactions of the succeeding year? Have they forgotten how the spirit of liberty in Ireland, debarred from its natural outlet, found a vent by forbidden passages? Have they forgotten how we were forced to indulge the Catholics in all the license of rebels, merely because we chose to withhold from them the liberties of subjects? Do they wait for associations more formidable

than that of the Corn Exchange, for contributions larger than the Rent, for agitators more violent than those who, three years ago, divided with the king and the Parliament the sovereignty of Ireland? Do they wait for that last and most dreadful paroxysm of popular rage, for that last and most cruel test of military fidelity?

Let them wait, if their past experience shall induce them to think that any high honor or any exquisite pleasure is to be obtained by a policy like this. Let them wait, if this strange and fearful infatuation be indeed upon them, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears, or understand with their heart. But let us know our interest and our duty better. Turn where we may, within, around, the voice of great events is proclaiming to us: Reform, that you may preserve. Now, therefore, while everything at home and abroad forebodes ruin to those who persist in a hopeless struggle against the spirit of the age; now, while the crash of the proudest throne of the continent is still resounding in our ears; now, while the roof of a British palace affords an ignominious shelter to the exiled heir of forty kings; now, while we see on every side ancient institutions subverted, and great societies dissolved; now, while the heart of England is still sound; now, while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm which may too soon pass away; now, in this your accepted time, now, in this your day of salvation, take counsel, not of prejudice,

not of party spirit, not of the ignominious pride of a fatal consistency, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentuous time.

Pronounce in a manner worthy of the expectation with which this great debate has been anticipated, and of the long remembrance which it will leave behind. Renew the youth of the State. Save property, divided against itself. Save the multitude, endangered by its own ungovernable passions. Save the aristocracy, endangered by its own unpopular power. Save the greatest, and fairest, and most highly civilized community that ever existed, from calamities which may in a few days sweep away all the rich heritage of so many ages of wisdom and glory. The danger is terrible. The time is short. If this bill should be rejected, I pray to God that none of those who concur in rejecting it may ever remember their votes with unavailing remorse, amid the wreck of laws, the confusion of ranks, the spoliation of property, and the dissolution of social order.

BROUGHAM

ON EMANCIPATION FOR THE NEGRO[1]

(1838)

Born in 1778, died in 1868; one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802; elected to Parliament in 1810; Counsel for Queen Caroline in 1820–21; Lord Chancellor in 1830–34.

I do not think, my lords, that ever but once before in the whole course of my public life have I risen to address either House of Parliament with the anxiety under which I labor at this moment.

I rush at once into the midst of this great argument—I drag before you once more, but I trust for the last time, the African slave trade, which I lately denounced here, and have so often elsewhere. On this we are all agreed. Whatever difference of opinion may exist on the question of slavery, on the slave traffic there can be none. I am now furnished with a precedent which may serve for an example to guide us. On slavery we have always held that the colonial legislature could not be trusted; that, to use Mr. Canning's expression, you must beware of allowing the masters of slaves to make laws upon slavery. But upon the detestable traffic in slaves I can show you the proceeding of a colonial assembly which we should ourselves do well to adopt after

[1] Delivered in the House of Lords in February, 1838, in support of resolutions for the immediate abolition of slavery. Abridged.

their example. These masters of slaves, not to be trusted on that subject, have acted well and wisely on this. The legislature of Jamaica, owners of slaves, and representing all other slave owners, feel that they also represent the poor negroes themselves; and they approach the throne, expressing themselves thankful—tardily thankful, no doubt—that the traffic has been for thirty years put down in our own colonies, and beseeching the sovereign to consummate the great work by the only effectual means—of having it declared piracy by the law of nations, as it is robbery and piracy and murder by the law of God!

I knew that this abominable law of our evil nature was not confined to different races, contrasted hues, and strange features, but prevailed also between white man and white—for I never yet knew any one hate me but those whom I had served, and those who had done me some grievous injustice. Why then should I expect other feelings to burn within the planter's bosom, and govern his conduct toward the unhappy beings who had suffered so much and so long at his hands? But, on the part of the slaves, I was not without some anxiety when I considered the corrupting effects of that degrading system under which they had for ages groaned, and recognized the truth of the saying in the first and the earliest of profane poets, that "the day which makes a man a slave robs him of half his value."

I might well think that the West Indian slave offered no exception to this maxim, that the habit of compulsory labor might have incapacitated him from voluntary exertion; that overmuch toil might have made all work his aversion; that never having been accustomed to provide for his own wants, while all his supplies were furnished by others, he might prove unwilling or unfit to work for himself, the ordinary inducements to industry never having operated on his mind.

Let us now see the results of their sudden tho partial liberation, and how far those fears have been realized; for upon this must entirely depend the solution of the present question—whether or not it is safe now to complete the emancipation, which, if it only be safe, we have not the shadow of right any longer to withhold.

Well, then, let us see. The first of August came, the object of so much anxiety and so many predictions—that day so joyously expected by the poor slaves, as sorely dreaded by their hard taskmasters; and surely, if there ever was a picture interesting, even fascinating, to look upon, if there ever was a passage in a people's history that redounded to their eternal honor, if ever triumphant answer was given to all the scandalous calumnies for ages heaped upon an oppressed race, as if to justify the wrongs done them—that picture, and that passage, and that answer were exhibited in the uniform history of that auspicious day all over the islands of the

Western Sea. Instead of the horizon being lit up with the lurid fires of rebellion, kindled by a sense of natural tho lawless revenge, and the just resistance to intolerable oppression, the whole of that widespread scene was mildly illuminated with joy, contentment, peace, and good will toward men.

No civilized nation, no people of the most refined character, could have displayed, after gaining a sudden and signal victory, more forbearance, more delicacy, in the enjoyment of their triumph, than these poor untutored slaves did upon the great consummation of all their wishes which they had just attained. Not a gesture or a look was seen to scare the eye; not a sound or a breath from the negro's lips was heard to grate on the ear of the planter. All was joy, congratulation, and hope. Everywhere were to be seen groups of these harmless folks assembled to talk over their good fortunes, to communicate their mutual feelings of happiness, to speculate on their future prospects. Finding that they were now free in name, they hoped soon to taste the reality of liberty. Feeling their fetters loosened, they looked forward to the day which would see them fall off, and the degrading marks which they left be effaced from their limbs.

But all this was accomplished with not a whisper that could give offense to the master by reminding him of the change. This delicate, calm, tranquil joy was alone to be marked on that day over all the chain of the Antilles.

Amusements there were none to be seen on that day—not even their simple pastimes by which they had been wont to beguile the hard hours of bondage, and which reminded that innocent people of the happy land of their forefathers, whence they had been torn by the hands of Christian and civilized men. The day was kept sacred as the festival of their liberation, for the negroes are an eminently pious race. Every church was crowded from early dawn with devout and earnest worshipers. Five or six times in the course of that memorable Friday were all those churches filled and emptied in succession by multitudes who came, not to give mouth-worship or eye-worship, but to render humble and hearty thanks to God for their freedom at length bestowed. In countries where the bounty of nature provokes the passions, where the fuel of intemperance is scattered with a profuse hand, I speak the fact when I tell that not one negro was seen in a state of intoxication. Three hundred and forty thousand slaves in Jamaica were at once set free on that day, and the peaceful festivity of those simple men was disturbed only on a single estate, in one parish, by the irregular conduct of three or four persons, who were immediately kept in order, and tranquillity was in one hour restored.

But the termination of slavery was to be an end of all labor; no man would work unless compelled, much less would any one work for hire. The cart-whip was to resound no more, and no

more could exertion be obtained from the indolent African. The prediction is found to have been ridiculously false; the negro peasantry is as industrious as our own, and wages furnish more effectual stimulus than the scourge.

Oh, but, said the men of colonial experience—the true practical men—this may do for some kinds of produce. Cotton may be planted, coffee may be picked, indigo may be manufactured—all these kinds of work the negro may probably be got to do; but at least the cane will cease to grow, the cane piece can no longer be hoed, nor the plant be hewn down, nor the juice boiled, and sugar will utterly cease out of the land.

Now let the man of experience stand forward,—the practical man, the inhabitant of the colonies,—I require that he now come forth with his prediction, and I meet him with the fact; let him but appear, and I answer for him, we shall hear him prophesy no more. Put to silence by the past, which even these confident men have not the courage to deny, they will at length abandon this untenable ground.

Twice as much sugar by the hour was found, on my noble friend's inquiry, to be made since the apprenticeship, as under the slave system, and of a far better quality; and one planter on a vast scale has said that with twenty free laborers he could do the work of a hundred slaves.

But linger not on the islands where the gift of freedom has been but half bestowed. Look

at Antigua and Bermuda, where the wisdom and the virtue have been displayed of at once giving complete emancipation. To Montserrat the same appeal might have been made, but for the folly of the upper House, which threw out the bill passed in the Assembly by the representatives of the planters. But in Antigua and in Bermuda, where for the last three years and a half there has not even been an apprentice—where all have been made at once as free as the peasantry of this country—the produce has increased, not diminished, and increased notwithstanding the accidents of bad seasons, droughts, and fires.

Whether we look to the noble-minded colonies which have at once freed their slaves, or to those who will still retain them in a middle and half-free condition, I have shown that the industry of the negro is undeniable, and that it is constant and productive in proportion as he is the director of its application and the master of its recompense. But I have gone a great deal further—I have demonstrated, by a reference to the same experience, the same unquestioned facts, that a more quiet, peaceful, inoffensive, innocent race is not to be found on the face of this earth than the Africans, not while dwelling in their own happy country, and enjoying freedom in a natural state under their own palm-trees and by their native streams, but after they have been torn away from it, enslaved, and their nature perverted in your Christian land, barbarized by

the policy of civilized states; their whole character disfigured, if it were possible to disfigure it; all their feelings corrupted, if you could have corrupted them. Every effort has been made to spoil the poor African, every source of wicked ingenuity exhausted to deprave his nature, all the incentives of misconduct placed around him by the fiend-like artifice of Christian civilized men, and his excellent nature has triumphed over all your arts; your unnatural culture has failed to make it bear the poisonous fruit that might well have been expected from such abominable husbandry, tho enslaved and tormented, degraded and debased, as far as human industry could effect its purpose of making him bloodthirsty and savage, his gentle spirit has prevailed and preserved, in spite of all your prophecies, aye, and of all your efforts, unbroken tranquillity over the whole Caribbean chain!

My lords, I can not better prove the absolute necessity of putting an immediate end to the state of apprenticeship than by showing what the victims of it are daily fated to endure. The punishments inflicted are of monstrous severity. The law is wickedly harsh; its execution is committed to hands that exasperate that cruelty. For the vague, undefined, undefinable offense of insolence, thirty-nine lashes; the same number for carrying a knife in the pocket; for cutting the shoot of a cane-plant, fifty lashes, or three months' imprisonment in that most loathsome of all dungeons, a West Indian jail.

There seems to have prevailed at all times among the lawgivers of the slave colonies a feeling of which I grieve to say those of the mother country have partaken: that there is something in the nature of a slave, something in the disposition of the African race, something in the habits of those hapless victims of our crimes, our cruelties, and frauds, which requires a peculiar harshness of treatment from their rulers, and makes what in other men's cases we call justice and mercy cruelty to society, and injustice to the law in theirs, inducing us to visit with the extremity of rigor in the African what, if done by our own tribes, would be slightly visited, or not at all, as tho there were in the negro nature something so obdurate that no punishment with which they can be punished would be too severe.

If some capricious despot were, in the career of ordinary tyranny, to tax his pampered fancy to produce something more monstrous, more unnatural than himself; were he to graft the thorn upon the vine, or place the dove among vultures to be reared, much as we might marvel at this freak of a perverted appetite, we should marvel still more if we saw tyranny, even its own measure of proverbial unreasonableness, and complain because the grape was not gathered from the thorn, or because the dove so trained had a thirst for blood. Yet this is the unnatural caprice, this the injustice, the gross, the foul, the outrageous, the monstrous, the incredible injust-

ice of which we are daily and hourly guilty toward the whole of the ill-fated African race.

My lords, we fill up the measure of this injustice by executing laws wickedly conceived, in a yet more atrocious spirit of cruelty. Our whole punishments smell of blood. Let the treadmill stop, from the weary limbs and exhausted frames of the sufferers no longer having the power to press it down the requisite number of turns in a minute, the lash instantly resounds through the mansion of woe! Let the stone spread out to be broken not crumble fast enough beneath the arms already scarred, flayed, and wealed by the whip, again the scourge tears afresh the half-healed flesh!

I hasten to a close. There remains little to add. It is, my lords, with a view to prevent such enormities as I have feebly pictured before you, to correct the administration of justice, to secure the comforts of the negroes, to restrain the cruelty of the tormentors, to amend the discipline of the prisons, to arm the governors with local authority over the police; it is with those views that I have formed the first five of the resolutions now upon your table, intending they should take effect during the very short interval of a few months which must elapse before the sixth shall give complete liberty to the slave.

From the instant that glad sound is wafted across the ocean, what a blessed change begins; what an enchanting prospect unfolds itself! The African, placed on the same footing with other

men, becomes in reality our fellow citizen—to our feelings, as well as in his own nature, our equal, our brother. No difference of origin or color can now prevail to keep the two castes apart. The negro, master of his own labor—only induced to lend his assistance if you make it his interest to help you, yet that aid being absolutely necessary to preserve your existence—becomes an essential portion of the community, nay, the very portion upon which the whole must lean for support.

So now the fulness of time is come for at length discharging our duty to the African captive. I have demonstrated to you that everything is ordered—every previous step taken—all safe, by experience shown to be safe, for the long-desired consummation. The time has come, the trial has been made, the hour is striking; you have no longer a pretext for hesitation, or faltering, or delay. The slave has shown, by four years' blameless behavior and devotion to the pursuits of peaceful industry, that he is as fit for his freedom as any English peasant, aye, or any lord whom I now address.

I demand his rights; I demand his liberty without stint. In the name of justice and of law, in the name of reason, in the name of God, who has given you no right to work injustice. I demand that your brother be no longer trampled upon as your slave! I make my appeal to the Commons, who represent the free people of England, and I require at their hands the per-

formance of that condition for which they paid so enormous a price—that condition which all their constituents are in breathless anxiety to see fulfilled! I appeal to this House! Hereditary judges of the first tribunal in the world, to you I appeal for justice! Patrons of all the arts that humanize mankind, under your protection I place humanity herself! To the merciful sovereign of a free people, I call aloud for mercy to the hundreds of thousands for whom half a million of her Christian sisters have cried out; I ask their cry may not have risen in vain. But, first, I turn my eye to the Throne of all justice, and, devoutly humbling myself before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold such vast iniquities, I implore that the curse hovering over the head of the unjust and the oppressor be averted from us, that your hearts may be turned to mercy, and that over all the earth His will may at length be done!

DICKENS

AS THE LITERARY GUEST OF AMERICA[1]

(1842)

Born in 1812, died in 1870; became a Reporter in 1835; published "Sketches by Boz" in 1836; visited America in 1842 and again in 1867-68.

I do not know how to thank you--I really do not know how. You would naturally suppose that my former experience would have given me this power, and that the difficulties in my way would have been diminished; but I assure you the fact is exactly the reverse, and I have completely balked the ancient proverb that "a rolling stone gathers no moss"; and in my progress to this city I have collected such a weight of obligations and acknowledgment—I have picked up such an enormous mass of fresh moss at every point, and was so struck by the brilliant scenes of Monday night, that I thought I could never by any possibility grow any bigger. I have made, continually, new accumulations to such an extent that I am compelled to stand still, and can roll no more!

Gentlemen, we learn from the authorities that, when fairy stones, or balls, or rolls of thread,

[1] Delivered in New York City, February 18, 1842, at a dinner in his honor, attended by nearly eight hundred persons, Washington Irving presiding.

stopped of their own accord—as I do not—it presaged some great catastrophe near at hand. The precedent holds good in this case. When I have remembered the short time I have before me to spend in this land of mighty interests, and the poor opportunity I can at best have of acquiring a knowledge of, and forming an acquaintance with it, I have felt it almost a duty to decline the honors you so generously heap upon me, and pass more quietly among you. For Argus himself, tho he had but one mouth for his hundred eyes, would have found the reception of a public entertainment once a week too much for his greatest activity; and as I would lose no scrap of the rich instruction and the delightful knowledge which meet me on every hand (and already I have gleaned a great deal from your hospitals and common jails), I have resolved to take up my staff, and go my way rejoicing, and for the future to shake hands with America, not at parties but at home; and, therefore, gentlemen, I say to-night, with a full heart, and an honest purpose, and grateful feelings, that I bear, and shall ever bear, a deep sense of your kind, your affectionate, and your noble greeting, which it is utterly impossible to convey in words. No European sky without, and no cheerful home or well-warmed room within, shall ever shut out this land from my vision. I shall often hear your words of welcome in my quiet room, and oftenest when most quiet; and shall see your faces in the blazing fire. If I

should live to grow old, the scenes of this and other evenings will shine as brightly to my dull eyes fifty years hence as now; and the honors you bestow upon me shall be well remembered and paid back in my undying love and honest endeavors for the good of my race.

There is in this city a gentleman who, at the reception of one of my books—I well remember it was the Old Curiosity Shop—wrote to me in England a letter so generous, so affectionate, and so manly, that if I had written the book under every circumstance of disappointment, of discouragement, and difficulty, instead of the reverse, I should have found in the receipt of that letter my best and most happy reward. I answered him, and he answered me, and so we kept shaking hands autographically, as if no ocean rolled between us. I came here to this city eager to see him, and [laying his hand upon Irving's shoulder] here he sits! I need not tell you how happy and delighted I am to see him here to-night in this capacity.

Washington Irving! Why, gentlemen, I do not go upstairs to bed two nights out of the seven—as a very creditable witness near at hand can testify—I say I do not go to bed two nights out of seven without taking Washington Irving under my arm; and, when I do not take him, I take his own brother, Oliver Goldsmith. Washington Irving! Why, of whom but him was I thinking the other day when I came up by the Hog's Back, the Frying Pan, Hell Gate, and all

these places? Why, when, not long ago, I visited Shakespeare's birthplace, and went beneath the roof where he first saw light, whose name but *his* was pointed out to me on the wall? Washington Irving—Diedrich Knickerbocker—Geoffrey Crayon—why, where can you go that they have not been there before? Is there an English farm—is there an English stream, an English city, or an English country-seat, where they have not been? Is there no Bracebridge Hall in existence? Has it no ancient shades or quiet streets?

In bygone times, when Irving left that Hall, he left sitting in an old oak chair, in a small parlor of the Boar's Head, a little man with a red nose, and an oilskin hat. When I came away he was sitting there still!—not a man *like* him, but the same man—with the nose of immortal redness and the hat of undying glaze. Crayon, while there, was on terms of intimacy with a certain radical fellow, who used to go about, with a hatful of newspapers, wofully out at elbows, and with a coat of great antiquity. Why, gentlemen, I know that man—Tibbles the elder, and he has not changed a hair; and, when I came away, he charged me to give his best respects to Washington Irving!

Leaving the town and the rustic life of England—forgetting this man, if we can—putting out of mind the country churchyard and the broken heart—let us cross the water again, and ask who has associated himself most closely with

the Italian peasantry and the bandits of the Pyrenees? When the traveler enters his little chamber beyond the Alps—listening to the dim echoes of the long passages and spacious corridors—damp, and gloomy, and cold—as he hears the tempest beating with fury against his window, and gazes at the curtains, dark, and heavy, and covered with mold—and when all the ghost-stories that ever were told come up before him—amid all his thick-coming fancies, of whom does he think? Washington Irving.

Go farther still: go to the Moorish fountains, sparkling full in the moonlight—go among the water-carriers and the village gossips, living still as in days of old—and who has traveled among them before you, and peopled the Alhambra and made eloquent its shadows? Who awakes there a voice from every hill and in every cavern, and bids legends, which for centuries have slept a dreamless sleep, or watched unwinkingly, start up before you and pass before you in all their life and glory?

But leaving this again, who embarked with Columbus upon his gallant ship, traversed with him the dark and mighty ocean, leaped upon the land and planted there the flag of Spain, but this same man, now sitting by my side? And being here at home again, who is a more fit companion for money-diggers? And what pen but his has made Rip Van Winkle, playing at nine-pins on that thundering afternoon, as much part and parcel of the Catskill Mountains as any tree or crag that they can boast?

But these are topics familiar from my boyhood, and which I am apt to pursue; and lest I should be tempted now to talk too long about them, I will, in conclusion, give you a sentiment, most appropriate, I am sure, in the presence of such writers as Bryant, Halleck, and—but I suppose I must not mention the ladies here—"The Literature of America." She well knows how to do honor to her own literature and to that of other lands, when she chooses Washington Irving for her representative in the country of Cervantes.

COBDEN

THE EFFECTS OF PROTECTION ON AGRICULTURE[1]

(1845)

Born in 1804, died in 1865; entered Parliament in 1841; negotiated a commercial treaty with France in 1859; supported the Union cause in the Civil War; noted as an advocate of free trade and the chief supporter of the Anti-Corn-Law League in 1839–46.

Sir, the object of this motion is to appoint a select committee to inquire into the present condition of the agricultural interests; and, at the same time, to ascertain how the laws regulating the importation of agricultural produce have affected the agriculturists of this country. As regards the distress among farmers, I presume we can not go to a higher authority than those honorable gentlemen who profess to be the farmers' friends and protectors. I find it stated by those honorable gentlemen who recently paid their respects to the prime minister, that the agriculturists are in a state of great embarrassment and distress. I find that one gentleman from Norfolk [Mr. Hudson] stated that the

[1] Delivered in the House of Commons, March 13, 1845, and described by John Morley as "probably the most powerful speech he ever made." Men on the Tory benches whispered to one another, "Peel must answer this." But Peel crushed in his hand the notes he had made and remarked, "Those may answer him who can." Abridged.

farmers in the county are paying their rents, but paying them out of capital, and not profits. I find Mr. Turner of Upton, in Devonshire, stating that one-half of the smaller farmers in that county are insolvent, and that the others are rapidly falling into the same condition; that the farmers with larger holdings are quitting their farms with a view of saving the rest of their property; and that, unless some remedial measures be adopted by this House, they will be utterly ruined.

The accounts which I have given you of those districts are such as I have had from many other sources. I put it to honorable gentlemen opposite, whether the condition of the farmers in Suffolk, Wiltshire, and Hampshire, is better than that which I have described in Norfolk and Devonshire? I put it to county members, whether —taking the whole of the south of England, from the confines of Nottinghamshire to the Land's End—whether, as a rule, the farmers are not now in a state of the greatest embarrassment? There may be exceptions; but I put it to them whether, as a rule, that is not their condition in all parts?

The distress of the farmers being admitted, the next question which arises is, What is its cause? I feel a greater necessity to bring forward this motion for a committee of inquiry, because I find great discrepancies of opinion among honorable gentlemen opposite as to what is the cause of the distress among the farmers. In the

first place there is a discrepancy as to the generality or locality of the existing distress. I find the right honorable baronet at the head of the government [Sir Robert Peel] saying that the distress is local; and he moreover says it does not arise from the legislation of this House. The honorable member for Dorsetshire declares, on the other hand, that the distress is general, and that it does not arise from legislation.

Now, there are these very different opinions on the other side of the House; but there are members upon this side representing very important interests, who think that farmers are suffering because they have this legislative protection. There is all this difference of opinion. Now, is not that a fit and proper subject for your inquiry? I am prepared to go into a select committee, and to bring forward evidence to show that the farmers are laboring under great evils—evils that I would connect with the legislation of this House, tho they are evils which appear to be altogether dissociated from it. The first great evil under which the farmer labors is the want of capital. No one can deny that. I do not mean at all to disparage the farmers. The farmers of this country are just the same race as the rest of us; and, if they were placed in a similar position, theirs would be as good a trade—I mean that they would be as successful men of business—as others; but it is notorious, as a rule, that the farmers of this country are deficient in capital; and I ask: How

can any business be carried on successfully where there is a deficiency of capital?

I take it that honorable gentlemen opposite, acquainted with farming, would admit that 10*l*. an acre, on an arable farm, would be a sufficient amount of capital for carrying on the business of farming successfully. I will take it, then, that 10*l*. an acre would be a fair capital for an arable farm. I have made many inquiries upon this subject in all parts of the kingdom, and I give it you as my decided conviction, that at this present moment farmers do not average 5*l*. an acre capital on their farms. I speak of England, and I take England south of the Trent, tho, of course, there are exceptions in every country; there are men of large capital in all parts—men farming their own land; but, taking it as a rule, I hesitate not to give my opinion—and I am prepared to back that opinion by witnesses before your committee—that, as a rule, farmers have not, upon an average, more than 5*l*. an acre capital for their arable land. I have given you a tract of country to which I may add all Wales; probably 20,000,000 of acres of cultivable land. I have no doubt whatever that there are 100,000,000*l*. of capital wanting upon that land. What is the meaning of farming capital? There are strange notions about the word "capital." It means more manure, a great amount of labor, a greater number of cattle, and larger crops. Picture a country in which you can say there is a deficiency of one-half of all those blessings

which ought to, and might, exist there, and then judge what the condition of laborers wanting employment and food is.

But you will say, capital would be invested if it could be done with profit. I admit it; that is the question I want you to inquire into. How is it that in a country where there is a plethora of capital, where every other business and pursuit is overflowing with money, where you have men going to France for railways and to Pennsylvania for bonds, embarking in schemes for connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific by canals, railways in the valley of the Mississippi, and sending their money to the bottom of the Mexican mines; while you have a country rich and overflowing, ready to take investments in every corner of the globe, how is it, I say, that this capital does not find its employment in the most attractive of all forms—upon the soil of this country? The cause is notorious—it is admitted by your highest authorities; the reason is, there is not security for capital in land. Capital shrinks instinctively from insecurity of tenure; and you have not in England that security which would warrant men of capital investing their money in the soil.

Now, is it not a matter worthy of consideration, how far this insecurity of tenure is bound up with that protective system of which you are so enamored? Suppose it can be shown that there is a vicious circle; that you have made politics of Corn Laws, and that you want voters

to maintain them; that you very erroneously think that the Corn Laws are your great mine of wealth, and, therefore, you must have a dependent tenantry, that you may have their votes at elections to maintain this law in Parliament. Well, if you will have dependent voters, you can not have men of spirit and capital. Then your policy reacts upon you. If you have not men of skill and capital, you can not have improvements and employment for your laborers. Then comes around that vicious termination of the circle—you have pauperism, poor-rates, county-rates, and all the other evils of which you are now speaking and complaining.

Now, sir, not only does the want of security prevent capital flowing into the farming business, but it actually deters from the improvement of the land those who are already in the occupation of it. There are many men, tenants of your land, who could improve their farms if they had a sufficient security, and they have either capital themselves or their friends could supply it; but with the absence of leases, and the want of security, you are actually deterring them from laying out their money on your land. They keep everything the same from year to year. You know that it is impossible to farm your estates properly unless a tenant has an investment for more than one year. A man ought to be able to begin a farm with at least eight years before him, before he expects to see a return for the whole of the outlay of his

money. You are, therefore, keeping your tenants-at-will at a yearly kind of cultivation, and you are preventing them carrying on their businesses in a proper way. Not only do you prevent the laying out of capital upon your land, and disable the farmers from cultivating it, but your policy tends to make them servile and dependent; so that they are actually disinclined to improvement, afraid to let you see that they can improve, because they are apprehensive that you will pounce upon them for an increase of rent.

Now, I do not know why we should not in this country have leases for land upon similar terms to the leases of manufactories, or any "plant" or premises. I do not think that farming will ever be carried on as it ought to be until you have leases drawn up in the same way as a man takes a manufactory, and pays perhaps a thousand pounds a year for it. I know people who pay four thousand pounds a year for manufactories to carry on their business, and at fair rents. There is an honorable gentleman near me who pays more than four thousand pounds a year for the rent of his manufactory. What covenants do you think he has in his lease? What would he think if it stated how many revolutions there should be in a minute of the spindles, or if they prescribed the construction of the straps or the gearing of the machinery? Why, he takes his manufactory with a schedule of its present state—bricks, mor-

tar, and machinery—and when the lease is over, he must leave it in the same state, or else pay a compensation for the dilapidation. [The chancellor of the exchequer: "Hear, hear!"]

The right honorable gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, cheers that statement. I want to ask his opinion respecting a similar lease for a farm. I am rather disposed to think that the Anti-Corn-Law Leaguers will very likely form a joint-stock association, having none but free-traders in the body, that we may purchase an estate and have a model farm; taking care that it shall be in one of the rural counties, one of the most purely agricultural parts of the country, where we think there is the greatest need of improvement—perhaps in Buckinghamshire,—and there shall be a model farm, homestead, and cottages; and I may tell the noble lord, the member for Newark, that we shall have a model garden, and he will not make any boast about it. But the great object will be to have a model lease. We will have as the farmer a man of intelligence and capital.

I am not so unreasonable as to tell you that you ought to let your land to men who have not a competent capital, or are not sufficiently intelligent; but I say, select such a man as that, let him know his business and have a sufficient capital, and you can not give him too wide a scope. We will find such a man, and will let him our farm; there shall be a lease precisely such as that upon which my honorable friend

takes his factory. There shall be no clause inserted in it to dictate to him how he shall cultivate his farm; he shall do what he likes with the old pasture. If he can make more by plowing it up he shall do so; if he can grow white crops every year—which I know there are people doing at this moment in more places than one in this country—or if he can make any other improvement or discovery, he shall be free to do so. We will let him the land, with a schedule of the state of tillage and the condition of the homestead, and all we will bind him to will be this: "You shall leave the land as good as when you entered upon it. If it be in an inferior state it shall be valued again, and you shall compensate us; but if it be in an improved state it shall be valued, and we, the landlords, will compensate you." We will give possession of everything upon the land, whether it be wild or tame animals; he shall have the absolute control.

Take as stringent precautions as you please to compel the punctual payment of the rent; take the right of reentry as summarily as you like if the rent be not duly paid, but let the payment of rent duly be the sole test as to the well-doing of the tenant; and so long as he can pay the rent, and do it promptly, that is the only criterion you need have that the farmer is doing well; and if he is a man of capital, you have the strongest possible security that he will

not waste your property while he has possession of it.

Now, sir, I do not stop to connect the cause and effect in this matter, and inquire whether your Corn Laws or your protective system have caused the want of leases and capital. I do not stop to make good my proof, and for this reason, that you have adopted a system of legislation in this House by which you profess to make the farming trade prosperous. I show you, after thirty years' trial, what is the depressed condition of the agriculturists; I prove to you what is the impoverished state of farmers, and also of laborers, and you will not contest any one of those propositions. I say it is enough, having had thirty years' trial of your specific with no better results than these, for me to ask you to go into committee to see if something better can not be devised. I am going to contend that free trade in grain would be more advantageous to farmers—and with them I include laborers—than restriction; to oblige the honorable member for Norfolk, I will take with them also the landlords; and I contend that free trade in corn and grain of every kind would be more beneficial to them than to any other class of the community. I should have contended the same before the passing of the late tariff, but now I am prepared to do so with tenfold more force.

What has the right honorable baronet [Sir R. Peel] done? He has passed a law to admit

fat cattle at a nominal duty. Some foreign fat cattle were selling in Smithfield the other day at about 15*l.* or 16*l.* per head, paying only about seven and one half per cent. duty; but he has not admitted the raw material out of which these fat cattle are made. Mr. Huskisson did not act in this manner when he commenced his plan of free trade. He began by admitting the raw material of manufactures before he admitted the manufactured article; but in your case you have commenced at precisely the opposite end, and have allowed free trade in cattle instead of that upon which they are fattened. I say give free trade in that grain which goes to make the cattle. I contend that by this protective system the farmers throughout the country are more injured than any other class in the community.

I will go further and say, that farmers with thin soil—I mean the stock farmers, whom you will find in Hertfordshire and Surrey, farmers with large capitals, arable farmers—I say those men are deeply interested in having a free importation of food for their cattle, because they have thin, poor land. This land of its own self does not contain the means of its increased fertility; and the only way is the bringing in of an additional quantity of food from elsewhere, that they can bring up their farms to a proper state of cultivation. I have been favored with an estimate made by a very experienced, clever farmer in Wiltshire—probably honorable gentlemen will bear me out, when I say a man of great

intelligence and skill, and entitled to every consideration in this House. I refer to Mr. Nathaniel Atherton, Kingston, Wilts. That gentleman estimates that upon 400 acres of land he could increase his profits to the amount of 280*l.*, paying the same rent as at present, provided there was a free importation of foreign grain of all kinds. He would buy 500 quarters of oats at 15*s.*, or the same amount in beans or peas at 14*s.* or 15*s.* a sack, to be fed on the land or in the yard; by which he would grow additional 160 quarters of wheat, and 230 quarters of barley, and gain an increased profit of 300*l.* upon his sheep and cattle. His plan embraces the employment of an additional capital of 1,000*l.*; and he would pay 150*l.* a year more for labor.

Now, I undertake to say, in the name of Mr. Atherton, of Wiltshire, and Mr. Lattimore, of Hertfordshire, that they are as decided advocates for free trade in grain of every kind as I am. I am not now quoting merely solitary cases. I told honorable gentlemen once before that I have probably as large an acquaintance among farmers as any one in the House. I think I could give you from every county the names of some of the first-rate farmers who are as ardent free-traders as I am. I requested the secretary of this much dreaded Anti-Corn-Law League to make me out a list of the farmers who are subscribers to that association, and I find there are upward of one hundred in England and Scotland who subscribe to the league fund, com-

prising, I hesitate not to say, the most intelligent men to be found in the kingdom. I went into the Lothians, at the invitation of twenty-two farmers there, several of whom were paying upward of 1,000*l*. a year rent. I spent two or three days among them, and I never found a body of more intelligent, liberal-minded men in my life. Those are men who do not want restrictions upon the importation of grain. They desire nothing but fair play. They say: "Let us have our Indian corn, Egyptian beans, and Polish oats as freely as we have our linseed cake, and we can bear competition with any corn-growers in the world." But by excluding the provender for cattle, and at the same time admitting the cattle almost duty free, I think you are giving an example of one of the greatest absurdities and perversions of nature and common sense that ever was seen.

Upon the last occasion when I spoke upon this subject, I was answered by the right honorable gentleman, the president of the Board of Trade. He talked about throwing poor lands out of cultivation, and converting arable lands into pasture. I hope that we men of the Anti-Corn-Law League may not be reproached again with seeking to cause any such disasters. My belief is—and the conviction is founded upon a most extensive inquiry among the most intelligent farmers, without stint of trouble and pains—that the course you are pursuing tends every hour to throw land out of cultivation, and make poor

lands unproductive. Do not let us be told again that we desire to draw the laborers from the land, in order that we may reduce the wages of the work-people employed in factories. I tell you that, if you bestow capital on the soil, and cultivate it with the same skill as manufacturers bestow upon their business, you have not population enough in the rural districts for the purpose. I yesterday received a letter from Lord Ducie, in which he gives precisely the same opinion. He says: "If we had the land properly cultivated, there are not sufficient laborers to till it." You are chasing your laborers from village to village, passing laws to compel people to support paupers, devising every means to smuggle them abroad—to the antipodes, if you can get them there; why, you would have to run after them, and bring them back again, if you had your land properly cultivated. I tell you honestly my conviction, that it is by these means, and these only, that you can avert very great and serious troubles and disasters in your agricultural districts.

On the last occasion when I addressed the House on this subject, I recollect stating some facts to show that you had no reasonable ground to fear foreign competition: those facts I do not intend to reiterate, because they have never been contradicted. But there are still attempts made to frighten people by telling them: "If you open the ports to foreign corn, you will have corn let in here for nothing." One of the

favorite fallacies which are now put forth is this: "Look at the price of corn in England, and see what it is abroad; you have prices low here, and yet you have corn coming in from abroad and paying the maximum duty. Now, if you had not 20*s.* duty to pay, what a quantity of corn you would have brought in, and how low the price would be!"

This statement arises from a fallacy—I hope not dishonestly put forth—in not understanding the difference between the real and the nominal price of corn. The price of corn at Dantzic now, when there is no regular sale, is nominal; the price of corn when it is coming in regularly is the real price. Now, go back to 1838. In January of that year the price of wheat at Dantzic was nominal; there was no demand for England; there were no purchasers except for speculation, with the chance, probably, of having to throw the wheat into the sea. But in the months of July and August of that year, when apprehensions arose of a failure of our harvest, then the price of corn in Dantzic rose instantly, sympathizing with the markets of England; and at the end of the year, in December, the price of wheat at Dantzic had doubled the amount at which it had been in January; and during the three following years, when you had a regular importation of corn,—during all that time, by the averages laid upon the table of this House, wheat at Dantzic averaged 40*s.* Wheat at Dantzic was at that price during the three years

1839, 1840, and 1841. Now, I mention this just to show the fact to honorable gentlemen, and to entreat them that they will not go and alarm their tenantry by this outcry of the danger of foreign competition. You ought to be pursuing a directly opposite course—you ought to be trying to stimulate them in every possible way, by showing that they can compete with foreigners; that what others can do in Poland, they can do in England.

But we are told that English agriculturists can not compete with foreigners, and especially with that serf labor that is to be found somewhere up the Baltic. Well, but flax comes from the Baltic and there is no protective duty. Honorable gentlemen say we have no objection to raw materials where there is no labor connected with them; but we can not contend against foreigners in wheat, because there is such an amount of labor in it. Why, there is twice as much labor in flax as there is in wheat; but the member for Shoreham favors the growth of flax in order to restore the country, which is sinking into this abject and hopeless state for want of agricultural protection. But the honorable baronet will forgive me—I am sure he will, he looks as if he would—if I allude a little to the subject of leases. The honorable gentleman on that occasion, I believe, complained that it was a great pity that farmers did not grow more flax. I do not know whether it was true or not that the

same honorable baronet's leases to his own tenants forbade them to grow that article.

Now, I have alluded to the condition of the laborers at the present time; but I am bound to say that while the farmers at the present moment are in a worse condition than they have been for the last ten years, I believe the agricultural laborers have passed over the winter with less suffering and distress, altho it has been a five-months' winter, and a severer one, too, than they endured in the previous year. [Hear!] I am glad to find that corroborated by honorable gentlemen opposite, because it bears out, in a remarkable degree, the opinion that we, who are in connection with the free trade question, entertain. We maintain that a low price of food is beneficial to the laboring classes. We assert, and we can prove it, at least in the manufacturing districts, that whenever provisions are dear, wages are low; and whenever food is cheap, wages invariably rise. We have had a strike in almost every business in Lancashire since the price of wheat has been down to something like 50*s.*; and I am glad to be corroborated when I state that the agricultural laborers have been in a better condition during the last winter than they were in the previous one. But does not that show that, even in your case, tho your laborers have in a general way only just as much as will find them a subsistence, they are benefited by a great abundance of the first necessaries of life? Altho their wages

may rise and fall with the price of food, altho they may go up with the advance in the price of corn, and fall when it is lowered; still, I maintain that it does not rise in the same proportion as the price of food rises, nor fall to the extent to which food falls. Therefore in all cases the agricultural laborers are in a better state when food is low than when it is high.

Now, I hold that this duty begins nearer home, and that the landed proprietors are the parties who are responsible if the laborers have not employment. You have absolute power; there is no doubt about that. You can, if you please, legislate for the laborers, or yourselves. Whatever you may have done besides, your legislation has been adverse to the laborer, and you have no right to call upon the farmers to remedy the evils which you have caused. Will not this evil—if evil you call it—press on you more and more every year? What can you do to remedy the mischief? I only appear here now because you have proposed nothing. We all know your system of allotments, and we are all aware of its failure. What other remedy have you? For, mark you, that is worse than a plaything, if you were allowed to carry out your own views. [Hear!] Aye, it is well enough for some of you that there are wiser heads than your own to lead you, or you would be conducting yourselves into precisely the same condition in which they are in Ireland, but with this difference—this increased difficulty—that there

they do manage to maintain the rights of property by the aid of the English Exchequer and 20,000 bayonets; but divide your own country into small allotments, and where would be the rights of property? What do you propose to do now? That is the question. Nothing has been brought forward this year, which I have heard, having for its object to benefit the great mass of the English population; nothing I have heard suggested which has at all tended to alleviate their condition.

You admit that the farmer's capital is sinking from under him, and that he is in a worse state than ever. Have you distinctly provided some plan to give confidence to the farmer, to cause an influx of capital to be expended upon his land, and so bring increased employment to the laborer? How is this to be met? I can not believe you are going to make this a political game. You must set up some specific object to benefit the agricultural interest. It is well said that the last election was an agricultural triumph. There are two hundred county members sitting behind the prime minister who prove that it was so.

What, then, is your plan for this distressing state of things? That is what I want to ask you. Do not, as you have done before, quarrel with me because I have imperfectly stated my case; I have done my best, and I again ask you what you have to propose? I tell you that this "Protection," as it has been called, is a failure.

It was so when you had the prohibition up to 80*s*. You know the state of your farming tenantry in 1821. It was a failure when you had a protection price of 60*s*., for you know what was the condition of your farm tenantry in 1835. It is a failure now with your last amendment, for you have admitted and proclaimed it to us; and what is the condition of your agricultural population at this time?

I ask, what is your plan? I hope it is not a pretense—a mere political game that has been played throughout the last election, and that you have not all come up here as mere politicians. There are politicians in the House—men who look with an ambition—probably a justifiable one—to the honors of office. There may be men who—with thirty years of continuous service, having been pressed into a groove from which they can neither escape nor retreat—may be holding office, high office, maintained there probably at the expense of their present convictions which do not harmonize very well with their early opinions. I make allowances for them; but the great body of the honorable gentlemen opposite came up to this House, not as politicians, but as the farmers' friends, and protectors of the agricultural interests. Well, what do you propose to do? You have heard the prime minister declare that, if he could restore all the protection which you have had, that protection would not benefit agriculturists. Is that your belief? If so, why not proclaim

it? And if it is not your conviction, you will have falsified your mission in this House by following the right honorable baronet out into the lobby, and opposing inquiry into the condition of the very men who sent you here.

With mere politicians I have no right to expect to succeed in this motion. But I have no hesitation in telling you that, if you give me a committee of this House, I will explode the delusion of agricultural protection! I will bring forward such a mass of evidence, and give you such a preponderance of talent and of authority, that when the blue book is published and sent forth to the world, as we can now send it, by our vehicles of information, your system of protection shall not live in public opinion for two years afterward. Politicians do not want that. This cry of protection has been a very convenient handle for politicians. The cry of protection carried the counties at the last election, and politicians gained honors, emoluments, and place by it. But is that old tattered flag of protection, tarnished and torn as it is already, to be kept hoisted still in the counties for the benefit of politicians; or will you come forward honestly and fairly to inquire into this question? I can not believe that the gentry of England will be made mere drumheads to be sounded upon by a prime minister to give forth unmeaning and empty sounds, and to have no articulate voice of their own. No! You are the gentry of England who represent the counties. You are the

aristocracy of England. Your fathers led our fathers; you may lead us if you will go the right way. But, altho you have retained your influence with this country longer than any other aristocracy, it has not been by opposing popular opinion, or by setting yourselves against the spirit of the age.

In other days, when the battle and the hunting-fields were the tests of manly vigor, your fathers were first and foremost there. The aristocracy of England were not like the noblesse of France, the mere minions of a court; nor were they like the hidalgos of Madrid, who dwindled into pigmies. You have been Englishmen. You have not shown a want of courage and firmness when any call has been made upon you. This is a new era. It is the age of improvement; it is the age of social advancement, not the age for war or for feudal sports. You live in a mercantile age, when the whole wealth of the world is poured into your lap. You can not have the advantages of commercial rents and feudal priviliges; but you may be what you always have been, if you will identify yourselves with the spirit of the age. The English people look to the gentry and aristocracy of their country as their leaders. I, who am not one of you, have no hesitation in telling you that there is a deep-rooted, an hereditary prejudice, if I may so call it, in your favor in this country. But you never got it, and you will not keep it, by obstructing the spirit of the age. If you are indifferent to

enlightened means of finding employment to your own peasantry; if you are found obstructing that advance which is calculated to knit nations more together in the bonds of peace by means of commercial intercourse; if you are found fighting against the discoveries which have almost given breath and life to material nature, and setting up yourselves as obstructives of that which destiny has decreed shall go on,—why, then, you will be the gentry of England no longer, and others will be found to take your place.

And I have no hesitation in saying that you stand just now in a very critical position. There is a wide-spread suspicion that you have been tampering with the best feelings and with the honest confidence of your constituents in this cause. Everywhere you are doubted and suspected. Read your own organs, and you will see that this is the case. Well, then, this is the time to show that you are not the mere party politicians which you are said to be. I have said that we shall be opposed in this measure by politicians; they do not want inquiry. But I ask you to go into this committee with me. I will give you a majority of county members. You shall have a majority of the Central Society in that committee. I ask you only to go into a fair inquiry as to the causes of the distress of your own population. I only ask that this matter may be fairly examined. Whether you establish my principle or yours,

good will come out of the inquiry; and I do, therefore, beg and entreat the honorable independent country gentlemen of this House that they will not refuse, on this occasion, to go into a fair, a full, and an impartial inquiry.

PEEL

FOR A REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS[1]

(1846)

Born in 1788, died in 1850; elected to Parliament as a Tory in 1809; Secretary for Ireland in 1812-18; Home Secretary in 1822 and again in 1828; Prime Minister in 1834; and again in 1841; became a Free-trader in 1846, and secured the repeal of the Corn Laws.

I BELIEVE it is now nearly three months since I first proposed, as the organ of her majesty's government, the measure which I trust is about to receive to-night the sanction of the House of Commons; and, considering the lapse of time—considering the frequent discussions—considering the anxiety of the people of this country that these debates should be brought to a close, I feel that I should be offering an insult to the House—I should be offering an insult to the country, if I were to condescend to bandy personalities upon such an occasion.

Sir, I foresaw that the course which I have taken from a sense of public duty would expose me to serious sacrifices. I foresaw, as its

[1] The last of a series of speeches made by Peel expounding the theory and practise of free trade. Delivered in the House of Commons May 15, 1846. Abridged. On June 25, 1850, the Repeal Bill passed both Houses. Three days later Peel spoke in the House for the last time, and on June 29 announced his resignation. His fatal accident (a fall from his horse) happened the next day.

inevitable result, that I must forfeit friendships which I most highly valued—that I must interrupt political relations in which I felt a sincere pride; but the smallest of all the penalties which I anticipated were the continued venomous attacks of the member for Shrewsbury.[1] Sir, I will only say of that honorable gentleman, that if he, after reviewing the whole of my public life—a life extending over thirty years previously to my accession to office in 1841—if he then entertained the opinion of me which he now professes; if he thought I was guilty of these petty larcenies from Mr. Horner and others, it is a little surprising that in the spring of 1841, after his long experience of my public career, he should have been prepared to give me his confidence.

It is still more surprising that he should have been ready—as I think he was—to unite his fortunes with mine in office, this implying the strongest proof which any public man can give of confidence in the honor and integrity of a minister of the Crown.

Sir, I have explained more than once what were the circumstances under which I felt it my duty to take this course. I did feel in November last that there was just cause for apprehension of scarcity and famine in Ireland. I am stating what were the apprehensions I felt at that time, what were the motives from which I acted; and those apprehensions, tho they may be denied

[1] Benjamin Disraeli, afterward Lord Beaconsfield.

now, were at least shared then by those honorable gentlemen who sit below the gangway [the Protectionists]. The honorable member for Somersetshire [Sir T. A. Acland] expressly declared that at the period to which I referred he was prepared to acquiesce in the suspension of the Corn Laws. An honorable member also, a recent addition to this House, who spoke with great ability the other night, the honorable member for Dorsetshire [Mr. Seymer], distinctly declared that he thought I should have abandoned my duty if I had not advised that, considering the circumstances of Ireland, the restrictions on the importation of foreign corn should be temporarily removed.

I may have been wrong, but my impression was, first, that my duty toward a country threatened with famine required that that which had been the ordinary remedy under all similar circumstances should be resorted to—namely, that there should be free access to the food of man from whatever quarter it might come. I was prepared to give the best proof which public men generally can give of the sincerity of their opinions, by tendering my resignation of office and devolving upon others the duty of proposing this measure; and, sir, I felt this—that if these laws were once suspended, and there was unlimited access to food, the produce of other countries, I, and those with whom I acted, felt the strongest conviction that it was not for the public interest, that it was not for the interest of

the agricultural party, that an attempt should be made permanently to reimpose restrictions on the importation of food.

And now, after all these debates, I am firmly convinced that it is better for the agricultural interest to contemplate the final settlement of this question, rather than to attempt the introduction of a law giving a diminished protection. My belief is that a diminished protection would in no respect conciliate agricultural feeling; and this I must say, nothing could be so disadvantageous as to give an ineffectual protection and yet incur all the odium of giving an adequate one. What have we been told during this discussion?

I am told that it would have been possible to continue this protection; but after the suspension of it—for I now assume that the suspension would have been assented to on account of the necessities of Ireland—the difficulty of maintaining it would have been greatly increased; because it would have been shown, after the lapse of three years, that, altho it had worked tolerably well during the continuance of abundance, or at least of average harvests, yet at the moment it was exposed to the severe trial of scarcity it then ceased to effect the object for which it was enacted, and that, in addition to the state of public feeling with reference to restrictions on imports generally, would have greatly added to the difficulty of maintaining the law. There would have been public proof

of its inefficiency for one of the great objects for which it was enacted.

But let me say, altho it has not been brought prominently under consideration, that, without any reference to the case of Ireland, the working of the law, as far as Great Britain is concerned, during the present year has not been satisfactory. You would have had to contend not merely with difficulties arising from suspension on account of the case of Ireland, but it would have been shown to you that the rate of duty has been high on account of the apparent lowness in the price of corn; while that lowness of price has arisen not from abundance in quantity, but from deficient quality. It would have been shown, and conclusively, that there are greater disparities of price in most of the principal markets of this country—between corn of the highest quality and of the lowest—than have ever existed in former periods. It would have been proved that there never was a greater demand than there has been during the present year for wheat of fine quality for the purpose of mixing with wheat of inferior quality, which forms the chief article brought for sale into our domestic markets. It would have been shown you that had there been free access to wheat of higher quality than they have assumed, the whole population of this country would for the last four months have been consuming bread of a better quality.

My belief, therefore, is that in seeking the re-enactment of the existing law after its suspension

you would have had to contend with greater difficulties than you anticipate. Still I am told, "You would have had a majority." I think a majority might have been obtained. I think you could have continued this law, notwithstanding these increased difficulties, for a short time longer; but I believe that the interval of its maintenance would have been but short, and that there would have been, during the period of its continuance, a desperate conflict between different classes of society; that your arguments in favor of it would have been weak; that you might have had no alternative at an early period, had the cycle of unfavorable harvests returned —and who can give an assurance that they would not?—that you might at an early period have had no alternative but to concede an alteration of this law under circumstances infinitely less favorable than the present to a final settlement of the question.

It was the foresight of these consequences—it was the belief that you were about to enter into a bitter and, ultimately, an unsuccessful struggle, that has induced me to think that for the benefit of all classes, for the benefit of the agricultural class itself, it was desirable to come to a permanent and equitable settlement of this question.

These are the motives on which I acted. I know the penalty to which I must be subject for having so acted; but I declare, even after the continuance of these debates, that I am only

the more impressed with the conviction that the policy we advise is correct.

My firm belief is—without yielding to the dictation of the League, or any other body—subjecting myself to that imputation, I will not hesitate to say my firm belief is that it is most consistent with prudence and good policy, most consistent with the real interests of the landed proprietors themselves, most consistent with the maintenance of a territorial aristocracy, seeing by how precarious a tenure, namely, the vicissitudes of seasons, you hold your present protective system—I say, it is my firm belief that it is for the advantage of all classes, in these times of comparative comfort and comparative calm, to anticipate the angry discussions which might arise, by proposing at once a final adjustment of this question.

I have stated the reasons which have induced me to take the present course. You may no doubt say that I am only going on the experience of three years and am acting contrary to the principles of my whole life. Well, I admit that charge—I admit that I have defended the existence of the Corn Laws—yes, and that up to the present period I have refused to acquiesce in the proposition to destroy them. I candidly admit all this; but when I am told that I am acting inconsistently with the principles of my whole life by advocating free trade, I give this statement a peremptory denial. During the last three years I have subjected myself to many

taunts on this question, and you have often said to me that Earl Grey had found out something indicating a change in my opinions.

Sir, I will not enter at this late hour into the discussion of any other topic. I foresaw the consequences that have resulted from the measures which I thought it my duty to propose. We were charged with the heavy responsibility of taking security against a great calamity in Ireland. We did not act lightly. We did not form our opinion upon merely local information—the information of local authorities likely to be influenced by an undue alarm. Before I and those who agreed with me came to that conclusion, we had adopted every means—by local inquiry and by sending perfectly disinterested persons of authority to Ireland—to form a just and correct opinion. Whether we were mistaken or not—I believe we were not mistaken, but even if we were mistaken—a generous construction should be put upon the motives and conduct of those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting millions of the subjects of the Queen from the consequences of scarcity and famine.

Sir, whatever may be the result of these discussions, I feel severely the loss of the confidence of those from whom I heretofore received a most generous support. So far from expecting them, as some have said, to adopt my opinions, I perfectly recognize the sincerity with which they adhere to their own. I recognize their perfect

right, on account of the admitted failure of my speculation, to withdraw from me their confidence.

I honor their motives, but I claim, and I always will claim, while entrusted with such powers and subject to such responsibility as the minister of this great country is entrusted with and is subject to—I always will assert the right to give that advice which I conscientiously believe to be conducive to the general well-being. I was not considering, according to the language of the honorable member for Shrewsbury, what was the best bargain to make for a party. I was considering first what were the best measures to avert a great calamity, and, as a secondary consideration, to relieve that interest which I was bound to protect from the odium of refusing to acquiesce in measures which I thought to be necessary for the purpose of averting that calamity. Sir, I can not charge myself or my colleags with having been unfaithful to the trust committed to us. I do not believe that the great institutions of this country have suffered during our administration of power. The noble lord [Lord John Russell] says he hopes that the discussions which have threatened the maintenance of amicable relations with the United States will be brought to a fortunate close.

Sir, I think I can appeal to the course which we have pursued against some obloquy, against some misconstruction, some insinuations that we were abandoning the honor of this country—I think

I can appeal to the past experience of this government that it has been our earnest desire, by every effort consistent with the national honor, to maintain friendly relations with every country on the face of the globe.

I have a strong belief that the greatest object which we or any other government can contemplate should be to elevate the social condition of that class of the people with whom we are brought into no direct relationship by the exercise of the elective franchise. I wish to convince them that our object has been to apportion taxation, that we shall relieve industry and labor from any undue burden, and transfer it, so far as is consistent with the public good, to those who are better enabled to bear it.

I look to the present peace of this country; I look to the absence of all disturbance—to the non-existence of any commitment for a seditious offense; I look to the calm that prevails in the public mind; I look to the absence of all disaffection; I look to the increased and growing public confidence on account of the course you have taken in relieving trade from restrictions, and industry from unjust burdens; and where there was dissatisfaction I now see contentment; where there was turbulence I see there is peace; where there was disloyalty I see there is loyalty; I see a disposition to confide in you, and not to agitate questions that are at the foundations of your institutions.

Deprive me of power to-morrow, you can

never deprive me of the consciousness that I have exercised the powers committed to me from no corrupt or interested motives—from no desire to gratify ambition or attain any personal object; that I have labored to maintain peace abroad consistently with the national honor and defending every public right—to increase the confidence of the great body of the people in the justice of your decisions; and by the means of equal law to dispense with all coercive powers—to maintain loyalty to the Throne and attachment to the Constitution, from a conviction of the benefit that will accrue to the great body of the people.

PALMERSTON

ON AFFAIRS IN GREECE[1]

(1850)

Born in 1784, died in 1865; elected to Parliament 1807; in the Duke of Portland's Cabinet in 1807; Secretary of War 1809–28; Foreign Minister as a Whig in 1830; supported the Italian Revolution in 1848; dismissed from office for approving the *coup d'etat* of Napoleon in 1851; Secretary of State in 1852; Prime Minister in 1855, and again in 1858.

ANXIOUS as many members are to deliver their sentiments upon this most important question, yet I am sure they will feel that it is due to myself, that it is due to this House, that it is due to the country, that I should not permit the second night of this debate to close without having stated to the House my views upon the matters in question and my explanation of that part of my conduct for which I have been called to account.

When I say that this is an important question I say it in the fullest expression of the term. It is a matter which concerns not merely the tenure of office by one individual, or even by a government; it is a question that involves principles of national policy and the deepest inter-

[1] From his famous "Civis Romanus Sum" speech delivered in the House of Commons, June, 1850—"a most able and temperate speech," said one of his associates; "a speech which made us all proud of the man who delivered it."

ests as well as the honor and dignity of England. I can not think that the course which has been pursued, and by which this question has assumed its present shape, is becoming those by whose act it has been brought under the discussion of Parliament, or such as fitting the gravity and the importance of the matters which they have thus led this House and the other House of Parliament to discuss.

The country is told that British subjects in foreign lands are entitled—for that is the meaning of the resolution—to nothing but the protection of the laws and the tribunals of the land in which they happen to reside. The country is told that British subjects abroad must not look to their own country for protection, but must trust to that indifferent justice which they may happen to receive at the hands of the government and tribunals of the country in which they may be.

I say, then, that our doctrine is that in the first instance redress should be sought from the law courts of the country; but that in cases where redress can not be so had—and those cases are many—to confine a British subject to that remedy only would be to deprive him of the protection which he is entitled to receive.

Then the question arises, how does this rule apply to the demands we have made upon Greece? And here I must shortly remind the House of the origin of our relations with Greece, and of the condition of Greece; because those

circumstances are elements that must enter into the consideration of the course we have pursued.

It is well known that Greece revolted from Turkey in 1820. In 1827, England, France, and Russia determined upon interposing, and ultimately, in 1828, they resolved to employ forcible means in order to bring Turkey to acknowledge the independence of Greece. Greece, by protocol in 1830, and by treaty in 1832, was erected into a separate and independent State. And whereas nearly from the year 1820 up to the time of that treaty of 1832, when its independence was finally acknowledged, Greece had been under a republican form of government, with an assembly and a president, the three powers determined that Greece should thenceforth be a monarchy.

But while England assented to that arrangement, and considered that it was better that Greece should assume a monarchical form of government, yet we attached to that assent an indispensable condition that Greece should be a constitutional monarchy. The British government could not consent to place the people of Greece, in their independent political existence, under as arbitrary a government as that from which they had revolted.

Consequently, when the three powers, in the exercise of that function which had been devolved upon them by the authority of the General Assembly of Greece, chose a sovereign for Greece (for that choice was made in consequence

of and by virtue of the authority given to them by the General Assembly of Greece), and when Prince Otho of Bavaria, then a minor, was chosen, the three powers, on announcing the choice they had made, at the same time declared that King Otho would, in concert with his people, give to Greece constitutional institutions.

The choice and that announcement were ratified by the king of Bavaria in the name and on behalf of his son. It was, however, understood that during the minority of King Otho the establishment of the constitution should be suspended; but that when he came of age he should enter into communication with his people and together with them arrange the form of constitution to be adopted. King Otho came of age, but no constitution was given. There was a disinclination on the part of his advisers to counsel him to fulfil that engagement.

The government of England expressed an opinion, through various channels, that that engagement ought to be fulfilled. But opinions of a different kind reached the royal ear from other quarters. Other governments naturally—I say it without implying any imputation—are attached to their own forms. Each government thinks its own form and nature the best, and wishes to see that form, if possible, extended elsewhere. Therefore I do not mention this with any intention of casting the least reproach upon Russia, or Prussia, or Austria. Those three governments at that time were despotic. Their ad-

vice was given and their influence was exerted to prevent the king of Greece from granting a constitution to his people. We thought, however, that in France we might find sympathy with our political opinions and support in the advice which we wished to give.

But we were unfortunate. The then government of France, not at all undervaluing constitutional institutions, thought that the time was not yet come when Greece could be ripe for representative government. The king of Bavaria leaned also to the same side. Therefore, from the time when the king came of age, and for several years afterward, the English government stood in this position in Greece with regard to its government—that we alone were anxious for the fulfilment of the engagement of the king, while all the other powers who were represented at Athens were averse to its being made good, or at least were not equally desirous of urging it upon the king of Greece.

This necessarily placed us in a situation, to say the least of it, of disfavor on the part of the agents of those powers and on the part of the government of Greece. I was sorry for it; at the same time I do not think the people of this country will be of opinion that we ought, for the sake of obtaining the mere good will of the Greek government, to have departed from the principle which we had laid down from the beginning. But it was so; and when people talk of the antagonistic influences which were in con-

flict at the Greek court; and when people say, as I have heard it said, that our ministers and the ministers of foreign governments were disputing about the appointment of mirarchs and monarchs, and God knows what petty officers of State, I say that, as far as our minister was concerned, that is a statement entirely at variance with the fact.

Our minister, Sir Edmund Lyons, had never, during the whole time he was in Greece, asked any favor of any sort or kind for himself or for any friend. No conduct of that mean, and low, and petty description was carried on by any person connected with the English government. It was known that we wished the Greek nation should have representative institutions, while, on the other hand, other influences were exerted the other way; and that, and that only, was the ground of the differences which existed.

One of the evils of the absence of constitutional institutions was that the whole system of government grew to be full of every kind of abuse. Justice could not be expected where the judges of the tribunals were at the mercy of the advisers of the Crown. The finances could not be in any order where there was no public responsibility on the part of those who were to collect or to spend the revenue. Every sort of abuse was practised.

In all times in Greece, as is well known, there has prevailed, from the daring habits of the people, a system of compulsory appropriation—

forcible appropriation by one man of that which belonged to another; which, of course, is very disagreeable to those who are the victims of the system, and exceedingly injurious to the social condition, improvement, and prosperity of the country. In short, what foreigners call brigandage, which prevailed under the Turkish rule, has not, I am sorry to say, diminished under the Greek sovereignty.

Well, this being the state of things in Greece, there have always been in every town in Greece a great number of persons whom we are bound to protect—Maltese, Ionians, and a certain number of British subjects. It became the practise of this Greek police to make no distinction between the Maltese and Ionians and their own fellow subjects.

It is a true saying, and has often been repeated, that a very moderate share of human wisdom is sufficient for the guidance of human affairs. But there is another truth, equally indisputable, which is that a man who aspires to govern mankind ought to bring to the task generous sentiments, compassionate sympathies, and noble and elevated thoughts.

I do not complain of the conduct of those who have made these matters the means of attack upon her majesty's ministers. The government of a great country like this is undoubtedly an object of fair and legitimate ambition to men of all shades of opinion. It is a noble thing to be allowed to guide the policy and to in-

fluence the destinies of such a country; and, if ever it was an object of honorable ambition, more than ever must it be so at the moment at which I am speaking. For while we have seen, as stated by the right honorable baronet the member for Ripon [Sir James Graham], the political earthquake rocking Europe from side to side; while we have seen thrones shaken, shattered, leveled; institutions overthrown, and destroyed; while in almost every country of Europe the conflict of civil war has deluged the land with blood from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean,—this country has presented a spectacle honorable to the people of England and worthy of the admiration of mankind.

We have shown that liberty is compatible with order; that individual freedom is reconcilable with obedience to the law. We have shown the example of a nation in which every class of society accepts with cheerfulness the lot which providence has assigned to it; while at the same time every individual of each class is constantly striving to raise himself in the social scale—not by injustice and wrong, not by violence and illegality, but by persevering good conduct and by the steady and energetic exertion of the moral and intellectual faculties with which his Creator has endowed him. To govern such a people as this is indeed an object worthy of the ambition of the noblest man who lives in the land; and therefore I find no fault with those who may

think any opportunity a fair one for endeavoring to place themselves in so distinguished and honorable a position. But I contend that we have not in our foreign policy done anything to forfeit the confidence of the country. We may not, perhaps, in this matter or in that, have acted precisely up to the opinions of one person or of another—and hard indeed it is, as we all know by our individual and private experience, to find any number of men agreeing entirely in any matter, on which they may not be equally possessed of the details of the facts, and circumstances, and reasons, and conditions which led them to action.

But, making allowance for those differences of opinion which may fairly and honorably arise among those who concur in general views, I maintain that the principles which can be traced through all our foreign transactions, as the guiding rule and directing spirit of our proceedings, are such as deserve approbation. I therefore fearlessly challenge the verdict which this House, as representing a political, a commercial, a constitutional country, is to give on the question now brought before it; whether the principles on which the foreign policy of her majesty's government has been conducted, and the sense of duty which has led us to think ourselves bound to afford protection to our fellow subjects abroad, are proper and fitting guides for those who are charged with the government of England; and whether as the Roman,

in days of old, held himself free from indignity when he could say *Civis Romanus sum,* so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong.

THACKERAY

ON CHARITY AND HUMOR[1]

(1852)

Born in 1811, died in 1863; lived in India until he was five years old educated at Cambridge; lived several years on the Continent; began to write for newspapers in 1833; went to Paris to study art in 1834; visited the East in 1844; visited the United States in 1852 and again in 1854.

BESIDES contributing to our stock of happiness, to our harmless laughter and amusement, to our scorn for falsehood and pretension, to our righteous hatred of hypocrisy, to our education in the perception of truth, our love of honesty, our knowledge of life, and shrewd guidance through the world, have not our humorous writers, our gay and kind week-day preachers, done much in support of that holy cause which has assembled you in this place, and which you are all abetting, —the cause of love and charity, the cause of the poor, the weak, and the unhappy; the sweet mission of love and tenderness, and peace and good will toward men? That same theme which is urged upon you by the eloquence and example of good men to whom you are delighted listeners on Sabbath days is taught in his way and ac-

[1] Delivered in New York City in 1852 on behalf of a charitable organization. Thackeray at this time was lecturing in New York on the English humorists.

cording to his power by the humorous writer, the commentator on every-day life and manners.

And as you are here assembled for a charitable purpose, giving your contributions at the door to benefit deserving people who need them, I like to hope and think that the men of our calling have done something in aid of the cause of charity, and have helped, with kind words and kind thoughts at least, to confer happiness and to do good. If the humorous writers claim to be week-day preachers, have they conferred any benefit by their sermons? Are people happier, better, better disposed to their neighbors, more inclined to do works of kindness, to love, forbear, forgive, pity, after reading in Addison, in Steele, in Fielding, in Goldsmith, in Hood, in Dickens? I hope and believe so, and fancy that in writing they are also acting charitably, contributing with the means which Heaven supplies them to forward the end which brings you, too, together.

A love of the human species is a very vague and indefinite kind of virtue, sitting very easily on a man, not confining his actions at all, shining in print, or exploding in paragraphs, after which efforts of benevolence the philanthropist is sometimes said to go home and be no better than his neighbors. Tartuffe and Joseph Surface, Stiggins and Chadband, who are always preaching fine sentiments and are no more virtuous than hundreds of those whom they denounce and whom they cheat, are fair objects of mistrust

and satire; but their hypocrisy, the homage, according to the old saying, which vice pays to virtue, has this of good in it, that its fruits are good: a man may preach good morals tho he may be himself but a lax practitioner; a Pharisee may put pieces of gold into the charity-plate out of mere hypocrisy and ostentation, but the bad man's gold feeds the widow and the fatherless as well as the good man's. The butcher and baker must needs look, not to motives, but to money, in return for their wares.

A literary man of the humoristic turn is pretty sure to be of a philanthropic nature, to have a great sensibility, to be easily moved to pain or pleasure, keenly to appreciate the varieties of temper of people round about him, and sympathize in their laughter, love, amusement, tears. Such a man is philanthropic, man-loving by nature, as another is irascible, or red-haired, or six feet high. And so I would arrogate no particular merit to literary men for the possession of this faculty of doing good which some of them enjoy. It costs a gentleman no sacrifice to be benevolent on paper; and the luxury of indulging in the most beautiful and brilliant sentiments never makes any man a penny poorer. A literary man is no better than another, as far as my experience goes; and a man writing a book no better or no worse than one who keeps accounts in a ledger or follows any other occupation. Let us, however, give him credit for the good, at least, which he is the means of

doing, as we give credit to a man with a million for the hundred which he puts into the plate at a charity-sermon. He never misses them. He has made them in a moment by a lucky speculation, and parts with them knowing that he has an almost endless balance at his bank, whence he can call for more. But in esteeming the benefaction we are grateful to the benefactor, too, somewhat; and so of men of genius, richly endowed, and lavish in parting with their mind's wealth, we may view them at least kindly and favorably, and be thankful for the bounty of which providence has made them the dispensers.

I have said myself somewhere, I do not know with what correctness (for definitions never are complete), that humor is wit and love; I am sure, at any rate, that the best humor is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavored throughout with tenderness and kindness. This love does not demand constant utterance or actual expression, as a good father, in conversation with his children or wife, is not perpetually embracing them or making protestations of his love; as a lover in the society of his mistress is not, at least as far as I am led to believe, for ever squeezing her hand or sighing in her ear, "My soul's darling, I adore you!" He shows his love by his conduct, by his fidelity, by his watchful desire to make the beloved person happy; it lightens from his eyes when she appears, tho he may not speak it; it fills his heart when she is present or absent; influences

all his words and actions; suffuses his whole being; it sets the father cheerily to work through the long day, supports him through the tedious labor of the weary absence or journey, and sends him happy home again, yearning toward the wife and children.

This kind of love is not a spasm, but a life. It fondles and caresses at due seasons, no doubt; but the fond heart is always beating fondly and truly, tho the wife is not sitting hand-in-hand with him or the children hugging at his knee. And so with a loving humor: I think, it is a genial writer's habit of being; it is the kind, gentle spirit's way of looking out on the world—that sweet friendliness which fills his heart and his style. You recognize it, even tho there may not be a single point of wit, or a single pathetic touch in the page; tho you may not be called upon to salute his genius by a laugh or a tear. That collision of ideas, which provokes the one or the other, must be occasional. They must be like papa's embraces, which I spoke of anon, who only delivers them now and again, and can not be expected to go on kissing the children all night. And so the writer's jokes and sentiment, his ebullitions of feeling, his outbreaks of high spirits, must not be too frequent. One tires of a page of which every sentence sparkles with points, of a sentimentalist who is always pumping the tears from his eyes or your own. One suspects the genuineness of the tear, the naturalness of the humor; these ought to be

true and manly in a man, as everything else in his life should be manly and true; and he loses his dignity by laughing or weeping out of place, or too often.

If I do not love Swift, as, thank God, I do not, however immensely I may admire him, it is because I revolt from the man who placards himself as a professional hater of his own kind; because he chisels his savage indignation on his tombstone, as if to perpetuate his protest against being born of our race—the suffering, the weak, the erring, the wicked, if you will, but still the friendly, the loving children of God our Father; it is because, as I read through Swift's dark volumes, I never find the aspect of nature seems to delight him, the smiles of children to please him, the sight of wedded love to soothe him. I do not remember in any line of his writing a passing allusion to a natural scene of beauty. When he speaks about the families of his comrades and brother clergymen, it is to assail them with gibes and scorn, and to laugh at them brutally for being fathers and for being poor. He does mention, in the Journal to Stella, a sick child, to be sure—a child of Lady Masham, that was ill of the smallpox—but then it is to confound the brat for being ill and the mother for attending to it when she should have been busy about a court intrigue, in which the Dean was deeply engaged. And he alludes to a suitor of Stella's, and a match she might have made, and would have made, very likely, with an

honorable and faithful and attached man, Tisdall, who loved her, and of whom Swift speaks, in a letter to his lady, in language so foul that you would not bear to hear it.

In treating of the good the humorists have done, of the love and kindness they have taught and left behind them, it is not of this one I dare speak. Heaven help the lonely misanthrope! be kind to that multitude of sins, with so little charity to cover them!

Of Addison's contributions to the charity of the world I have spoken before, in trying to depict that noble figure; and say now, as then, that we should thank him as one of the greatest benefactors of that vast and immeasurably spreading family which speaks our common tongue. Wherever it is spoken, there is no man that does not feel, and understand, and use the noble English word "gentleman." And there is no man that teaches us to be gentlemen better than Joseph Addison. Gentle in our bearing through life; gentle and courteous to our neighbor; gentle in dealing with his follies and weaknesses; gentle in treating his opposition; deferential to the old; kindly to the poor, and those below us in degree—for people above us and below us we must find, in whatever hemisphere we dwell, whether kings or presidents govern us, and in no republic or monarchy that I know of, is a citizen exempt from the tax of befriending poverty and weakness, of respecting age, and of honoring his father and mother. It has

just been whispered to me—I have not been three months in the country, and, of course, can not venture to express an opinion of my own—that, in regard to paying this later tax of respect and honor to age, some very few of the Republican youths are occasionally a little remiss. I have heard of young Sons of Freedom publishing their Declaration of Independence before they could well spell it; and cutting the connection with father and mother before they had learned to shave. My own time of life having been stated by various enlightened organs of public opinion, at almost any figure from forty-five to sixty, I cheerfully own that I belong to the fogy interest, and ask leave to rank in, and plead for that respectable class. Now a gentleman can but be a gentleman, in Broadway or the backwoods, in Pall Mall or California; and where and whenever he lives, thousands of miles away in the wilderness, or hundreds of years hence, I am sure that reading the writings of this true gentleman, this true Christian, this noble Joseph Addison, must do him good.

Steele, as a literary benefactor to the world's charity, must rank very high, indeed, not merely from his givings, which were abundant, but because his endowments are prodigiously increased in value since he bequeathed them, as the revenues of the lands, bequeathed to our Foundling Hospital at London, by honest Captain Coram, its founder, are immensely enhanced by the houses since built upon them. Steele was

the founder of sentimental writing in English, and how the land has been since occupied, and what hundreds of us have laid out gardens and built up tenements on Steele's ground! Before his time, readers or hearers were never called upon to cry except at a tragedy, and compassion was not expected to express itself otherwise than in blank verse, of for personages much lower in rank than a dethroned monarch, or a widowed or a jilted empress. He stepped off the high-heeled cothurnus, and came down into common life; he held out his great hearty arms, and embraced us all; he had a bow for all women; a kiss for all children; a shake of the hand for all men, high or low; he showed us Heaven's sun shining every day on quiet homes; not gilded palace roofs only, or court processions, or heroic warriors fighting for princesses and pitched battles. He took away comedy from behind the fine lady's alcove, or the screen where the libertine was watching her. He ended all that wretched business of wives jeering at their husbands, of rakes laughing wives, and husbands, too, to scorn. That miserable, rouged, tawdry, sparkling, hollow-hearted comedy of the Restoration fled before him, and, like the wicked spirit in the fairy-books, shrank, as Steele let the daylight in, and shrieked, and shuddered, and vanished. The stage of humorists has been common life ever since Steele's and Addison's time; the joys and griefs, the aversions and sympathies, the laughter and tears of nature.

As for Goldsmith, if the youngest and most unlettered person here has not been happy with the family at Wakefield; has not rejoiced when Olivia returned, and been thankful for her forgiveness and restoration; has not laughed with delighted good humor over Moses's gross of green spectacles; has not loved with all his heart the good vicar, and that kind spirit which created these charming figures, and devised the beneficent fiction which speaks to us so tenderly —what call is there for me to speak? In this place, and on this occasion, remembering these men, I claim from you your sympathy for the good they have done, and for the sweet charity which they have bestowed on the world.

In our days, in England, the importance of the humorous preacher has prodigiously increased; his audiences are enormous; every week or month his happy congregations flock to him; they never tire of such sermons. I believe my friend Mr. "Punch" is as popular to-day as he has been any day since his birth; I believe that Mr. Dickens's readers are even more numerous than they have ever been since his unrivaled pen commenced to delight the world with its humor. We have among us other literary parties; we have "Punch," as I have said, preaching from his booth; we have a Jerrold party very numerous, and faithful to that acute thinker and distinguished wit; and we have also—it must be said, and it is still to be hoped—a "Vanity Fair" party, the author of which work has

lately been described by the London *Times* newspaper as a writer of considerable parts, but a dreary misanthrope, who sees no good anywhere, who sees the sky above him green, I think, instead of blue, and only miserable sinners round about him. So we are; so is every writer and every reader I ever heard of; so was every being who ever trod this earth, save One. I can not help telling the truth as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak, that truth must be told, that fault must be owned, that pardon must be prayed for, and that love reigns supreme over all.

I look back at the good which of late years the kind English humorists have done; and if you are pleased to rank the present speaker among that class, I own to an honest pride at thinking what benefits society has derived from men of our calling. That "Song of the Shirt" which "Punch" first published, and the noble, the suffering, the melancholy, the tender Hood sang, may surely rank as a great act of charity to the world, and call from it its thanks and regard for its teacher and benefactor. That astonishing poem, which you all of you know, of the "Bridge of Sighs,"—who can read it without tenderness, without reverence to heaven, charity to man, and thanks to the beneficent genius which sang for us nobly?

I never saw the writer but once; but shall always be glad to think that some words of mine, printed in a periodical of that day, and in praise of those amazing verses (which, strange to say, appeared almost unnoticed at first in the magazine in which Mr. Hood published them)—I am proud, I say, to think that some words of appreciation of mine reached him on his death-bed and pleased and soothed him in that hour of manful resignation and pain.

As for the charities of Mr. Dickens, multiplied kindnesses which he has conferred upon us all—upon our children, upon people educated and uneducated, upon the myriads here and at home who speak our common tongue—have not you, have not I, all of us reason to be thankful to this kind friend, who soothed and charmed so many hours, brought pleasure and sweet laughter to so many homes, made such multitudes of children happy, endowed us with such a sweet store of gracious thoughts, fair fancies, soft sympathies, hearty enjoyments? There are creations of Mr. Dickens which seem to me to rank as personal benefits; figures so delightful, that one feels happier and better for knowing them, as one does for being brought into the society of very good men and women. The atmosphere in which these people live is wholesome to breathe in; you feel that to be allowed to speak to them is a personal kindness; you come away better for your contact with them; your hands seem cleaner from having the privi-

lege of shaking theirs. Was there ever a better charity sermon preached in the world than Dickens's "Christmas Carol"? I believe it occasioned immense hospitality throughout England; was the means of lighting up hundreds of kind fires at Christmas time; caused a wonderful outpouring of Christmas good feeling, of Christmas punch-brewing; an awful slaughter of Christmas turkeys, and roasting and basting of Christmas beef. As for this man's love of children, that amiable organ at the back of his honest head must be perfectly monstrous. All children ought to love him. I know two that do, and read his books ten times for once that they peruse the dismal preachments of their father. I know one who, when she is happy, reads "Nicholas Nickleby"; when she is unhappy, reads "Nicholas Nickleby"; when she is tired, reads "Nicholas Nickleby"; when she is in bed, reads "Nicholas Nickleby"; when she has nothing to do, reads "Nicholas Nickleby"; and when she has finished the book, reads "Nicholas Nickleby" over again. This candid young critic, at ten years of age, said, "I like Mr. Dickens's books much better than your books, papa"; and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books. Who can? Every man must say his own thoughts in his own voice, in his own way; lucky is he who has such a charming gift of nature as this, which brings

all the children in the world trooping to him, and being fond of him.

I remember, when that famous "Nicholas Nickleby" came out, seeing a letter from a pedagog in the north of England, which, dismal as it was, was immensely comical. "Mr. Dickens's ill-advised publication," wrote the poor schoolmaster, "has passed like a whirlwind over the schools of the North." He was a proprietor of a cheap school; Dotheboys Hall was a cheap school. There were many such establishments in the northern counties. Parents were ashamed that never were ashamed before until the kind satirist laughed at them; relatives were frightened; scores of little scholars were taken away; poor schoolmasters had to shut their shops up; every pedagog was voted a Squeers, and many suffered, no doubt unjustly; but afterward, schoolboys' backs were not so much caned; schoolboys' meat was less tough and more plentiful; and schoolboys' milk was not so sky-blue. What a kind light of benevolence it is that plays round Crummles and the Phenomenon, and all those poor theater people in that charming book! What a humor! and what a good humor!

One might go on, tho the task would be endless and needless, chronicling the names of kind folks with whom this kind genius has made us familiar. Who does not love the Marchioness and Mr. Richard Swiveller? Who does not sympathize, not only with Oliver Twist, but his admirable young friend, the Artful Dodger? Who

has not the inestimable advantage of possessing a Mrs. Nickleby in his own family? Who does not bless Sairey Gamp and wonder at Mrs. Harris? Who does not venerate the chief of that illustrious family who, being stricken by misfortune, wisely and greatly turned his attention to "coals," the accomplished, the Epicurean, the dirty, the delightful Micawber?

I may quarrel with Mr. Dickens's art a thousand and a thousand times—I delight and wonder at his genius; I recognize in it—I speak with awe and reverence—a commission from that Divine Beneficence whose blessed task we know it will one day be to wipe every tear from every eye. Thankfully I take my share of the feast of love and kindness which this gentle, and generous, and charitable soul has contributed to the happiness of the world. I take and enjoy my share, and say a Benediction for the meal.[1]

[1] This generous tribute to Dickens, at the time of the greatest rivalry between him and Thackeray, has been much admired and often quoted to Thackeray's credit.

NEWMAN

CATHOLICISM AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD[1]

(1849)

Born in 1801, died in 1890; Fellow of Oriel in 1822; wrote "Lead Kindly Light" in 1832; joined the Oxford Movement in 1833; entered the Church of Rome in 1845; established his Oratory in 1849; made a Cardinal in 1879.

How different are all religions that ever were, from the lofty and unchangeable Catholic Church! They depend on time and place for their existence; they live in periods or in regions. They are children of the soil, indigenous plants, which readily flourish under a certain temperature, in a certain aspect, in moist or in dry, and die if they are transplanted. Their *habitat* is one article of their scientific description. Thus the Greek schism, Nestorianism, the heresy of Calvin, and Methodism, each has its geographical limits. Protestantism has gained nothing in Europe since its first outbreak. Some accident gives rise to these religious manifestations; some sickly season, the burning sun, the vapor-laden marsh, breeds a pestilence, and there it remains, hanging in the air over its birthplace perhaps for centuries; then some change

[1] From "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," published in 1849.

takes place in the earth or in the heavens, and it suddenly is no more.

Sometimes, however, it is true, such scourges of God have a course upon earth, and affect a Catholic range. They issue as from some poisonous lake or pit in Ethiopia or in India, and march forth with resistless power to fulfil their mission of evil, and walk to and fro over the face of the world. Such was the Arabian imposture of which Mohammed was the framer; and you will ask, perhaps, whether it has not done that which I have said the Catholic Church alone can do, and proved thereby that it had in it an internal principle, which, depending not on man, could subdue him in any time or place? No; look narrowly, and you will see the marked distinction which exists between the religion of Mohammed and the Church of Christ. For Mohammedanism has done little more than the Anglican communion is doing at present. That communion is found in many parts of the world; its primate has a jurisdiction even greater than the Nestorian Patriarch of old; it has establishments in Malta, in Jerusalem, in India, in China, in Australia, in South Africa, and in Canada. Here, at least, you will say, is Catholicity, even greater than that of Mohammed. Oh, be not beguiled by words; will any thinking man say for a moment, whatever this objection be worth, that the Established Religion *is* superior to time and place? Well, if not, why set about proving that it is? Rather, does not its essence lie in its rec-

ognition by the State? Is not its establishment its very *form?* What would it be—would it last ten years, if abandoned to itself? It is its establishment which erects it into a unity and individuality. Can you contemplate it, tho you stimulate your imagination to the task, abstracted from its churches, palaces, colleges, parsonages, revenues, civil precedence, and national position? Strip it of its world, and you have performed a mortal operation upon it, for it has ceased to be.

Take its bishops out of the legislature, tear its formularies from the Statute Book, open its universities to Dissenters, allow its clergy to become laymen again, legalize its private prayer-meetings, and what would be its definition? You know that, did not the State compel it to be one, it would split at once into three several bodies, each bearing within it the elements of further divisions. Even the small party of non-jurors, a century and a half since, when released from the civil power, split into two. It has then no internal consistency, or individuality, or soul, to give it the capacity of propagation. Methodism represents some sort of an idea, Congregationalism an idea; the Established Religion has in it no idea beyond establishment. Its extension has been, for the most part, not active; it is carried forward into other places by State policy, and it moves because the State moves; it is an appendage, whether weapon or decoration, of the sovereign power; it is the religion,

not even of a race, but of the ruling portion of a race. The Anglo-Saxon has done in this day what the Saracen did in a former. He does grudgingly for expedience what the other did heartily from fanaticism. This is the chief difference between the two: the Saracen, in his commencement, converted the heretical East with the sword; but at least in India the extension of his faith has been by emigration, as the Anglo-Saxon's now; he grew into other nations by commerce and colonization; but, when he encountered the Catholic of the West, he made as little impression upon Spain, as the Protestant Anglo-Saxon makes on Ireland.

There is but one form of Christianity possessed of that real internal unity which is the primary condition of independence. When you look to Russia, England, or Germany, this note of divinity is wanting. In this country, especially, there is nothing broader than class religions; the established form itself is but the religion of a class. There is one persuasion for the rich, and another for the poor; men are born in this or that sect; the enthusiastic go here, and the sober-minded and rational go there. They make money, and rise in the world, and then they profess to belong to the Establishment. This body lives in the world's smile, that in its frown; the one would perish of cold in the world's winter, and the other would melt away in the summer. Not one of them undertakes human nature; none compasses the whole man;

none places all men on a level; none addresses the intellect and the heart, fear and love, the active and the contemplative. It is considered, and justly, as an evidence for Christianity, that the ablest men have been Christians; not that all sagacious or profound minds have taken up its profession, but that it has gained victories among them, such and so many, as to show that it is not the mere fact of ability or learning which is the reason why all are not converted.

Such, too, is the characteristic of Catholicity; not the highest in rank, not the meanest, not the most refined, not the rudest, is beyond the influence of the Church; she includes specimens of every class among her children. She is the solace of the forlorn, the chastener of the prosperous, and the guide of the wayward. She keeps a mother's eye for the innocent, bears with a heavy hand upon the wanton, and has a voice of majesty for the proud. She opens the mind of the ignorant, and she prostrates the intellect of even the most gifted. These are not words; she had done it, she does it still, she undertakes to do it. All she asks is an open field, and freedom to act. She asks no patronage from the civil power; in former times and places she has asked it, and, as Protestantism also, has availed herself of the civil sword. It is true she did so, because in certain ages it has been the acknowledged mode of acting, the most expeditious, and open at the time to no objection, and because, where she has done so, the people

clamored for it and did it in advance of her; but her history shows that she needed it not, for she has extended and flourished without it. She is ready for any service which occurs; she will take the world as it comes; nothing but force can repress her. See, my brethren, what she is doing in this country now: for three centuries the civil power has trodden down the goodly plant of grace, and kept its foot upon it; at length circumstances have removed that tyranny, and lo! the fair form of the Ancient Church rises up at once, as fresh and as vigorous as if she had never intermitted her growth. She is the same as she was three centuries ago, ere the present religions of the country existed; you know her to be the same; it is the charge brought against her that she does not change; time and place affect her not, because she has her source where there is neither time nor place, because she comes from the throne of the Illimitable, Eternal God.

BRIGHT

I

ON THE ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY[1]

(1858)

Born in 1811, died in 1889; prominent in the Anti-Corn-Law League in 1838–1846; entered Parliament in 1854; supported the Union cause in the American Civil War of 1861–1865; President of the Board of Trade in 1868–70; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1873–74, and again in 1880–82; Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow in 1883.

The frequent and far too complimentary manner in which my name has been mentioned to-night, and the most kind way in which you have received me, have placed me in a position somewhat humiliating, and really painful; for to receive laudation which one feels one can not possibly have merited, is much more painful than to be passed by in a distribution of commendation to which possibly one might lay some claim.

If one twentieth part of what has been said is true, if I am entitled to any measure of your approbation, I may begin to think that my public career and my opinions are not so un-

[1] Delivered in Birmingham at a banquet in his honor, October 29, 1858. Abridged. Bright had then been long absent from public life. Early in 1857, because of his severe criticism of the policy of Lord Palmerston in the Crimean War, he had lost his seat.

English and so antinational as some of those who profess to be the best of our public instructors have sometimes assumed. How, indeed, can I, any more than any of you, be unEnglish and antinational? Was I not born upon the same soil? Do I not come of the same English stock? Are not my family committed irrevocably to the fortunes of this country? Is not whatever property I may have depending, as much as yours is depending, upon the good government of our common fatherland? Then how shall any man dare to say to any one of his countrymen, because he happens to hold a different opinion on questions of great public policy, that therefore he is unEnglish, and is to be condemned as antinational? There are those who would assume that between my countrymen and me, and between my constituents and me, there has been, and there is now, a great gulf fixed, and that if I can not pass over to them and to you, they and you can by no possibility pass over to me.

Now, I take the liberty here, in the presence of an audience as intelligent as can be collected within the limits of this island, and of those who have the strongest claims to know what opinions I do entertain relative to certain great questions of public policy, to assert that I hold no views, that I have never promulgated any views, on those controverted questions with respect to which I can not bring as witnesses in my favor, and as fellow believers with myself,

some of the best and most revered names in the history of English statesmanship.

We all know and deplore that at the present moment a larger number of the grown men of Europe are employed, and a larger portion of the industry of Europe is absorbed, to provide for, and maintain, the enormous armaments which are now on foot in every considerable continental state. Assuming, then, that Europe is not much better in consequence of the sacrifices we have made, let us inquire what has been the result in England, because, after all, that is the question which it becomes us most to consider. I believe that I understate the sum when I say that, in pursuit of this will-o'-the-wisp (the liberties of Europe and the balance of power), there has been extracted from the industry of the people of this small island no less an amount than 2,000,000,000*l.* sterling. I can not imagine how much 2,000,000,000*l.* is, and therefore I shall not attempt to make you comprehend it.

I presume it is something like those vast and incomprehensible astronomical distances with which we have been lately made familiar; but, however familiar, we feel that we do not know one bit more about them than we did before. When I try to think of that sum of 2,000,000,000*l.* there is a sort of vision passes before my mind's eye. I see your peasant laborer delve and plow, sow and reap, sweat beneath the summer's sun, or grow prematurely old before

the winter's blast. I see your noble mechanic with his manly countenance and his matchless skill, toiling at his bench or his forge. I see one of the workers in our factories in the north, a woman—a girl it may be—gentle and good, as many of them are, as your sisters and daughters are—I see her intent upon the spindle, whose revolutions are so rapid, that the eye fails altogether to detect them, or watching the alternating flight of the unresting shuttle. I turn again to another portion of your population, which, "plunged in mines, forgets a sun was made," and I see the man who brings up from the secret chambers of the earth the elements of the riches and greatness of this country. When I see all this I have before me a mass of produce and of wealth which I am no more able to comprehend than I am that 2,000,-000,000*l*. of which I have spoken, but I behold in its full proportions the hideous error of your governments, whose fatal policy consumes in some cases a half, never less than a third, of all the results of that industry which God intended should fertilize and bless every home in England, but the fruits of which are squandered in every part of the surface of the globe, without producing the smallest good to the people of England.

We have, it is true, some visible results that are of a more positive character. We have that which some people call a great advantage—the national debt—a debt which is now so large

that the most prudent, the most economical, and the most honest have given up all hope, not of its being paid off, but of its being diminished in amount.

We have, too, taxes which have been during many years so onerous that there have been times when the patient beasts of burden threatened to revolt—so onerous that it has been utterly impossible to levy them with any kind of honest equality, according to the means of the people to pay them. We have that, moreover, which is a standing wonder to all foreigners who consider our condition—an amount of apparently immovable pauperism which to strangers is wholly irreconcilable with the fact that we, as a nation, produce more of what should make us all comfortable than is produced by any other nation of similar numbers on the face of the globe. Let us likewise remember that during the period of those great and so-called glorious contests on the continent of Europe, every description of home reform was not only delayed, but actually crushed out of the minds of the great bulk of the people. There can be no doubt whatever that in 1793 England was about to realize political changes and reforms, such as did not appear again until 1830, and during the period of that war, which now almost all men agree to have been wholly unnecessary, we were passing through a period which may be described as the dark age of English politics; when there was no more freedom to write or speak,

or politically to act, than there is now in the most despotic country of Europe.

But, it may be asked, did nobody gain? If Europe is no better, and the people of England have been so much worse, who has benefited by the new system of foreign policy? What has been the fate of those who were enthroned at the Revolution, and whose supremacy has been for so long a period undisputed among us? Mr. Kinglake, the author of an interesting book on Eastern travel,[1] describing the habits of some acquaintances that he made in the Syrian deserts, says that the jackals of the desert follow their prey in families like the place-hunters of Europe. I will reverse, if you like, the comparison, and say that the great territorial families of England, which were enthroned at the Revolution, have followed their prey like the jackals of the desert. Do you not observe at a glance, that, from the time of William III., by reason of the foreign policy which I denounce, wars have been multiplied, taxes increased, loans made, and the sums of money which every year the government has to expend augmented, and that so the patronage at the disposal of ministers must have increased also, and the families who were enthroned and made powerful in the legislation and administration of the country must have had the first pull at, and the largest profit out of, that patronage? There is no actuary

[1] Eothen; or, Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East (1844).

in existence who can calculate how much of the wealth, of the strength, of the supremacy of the territorial families of England, has been derived from an unholy participation in the fruits of the industry of the people, which have been wrested from them by every device of taxation, and squandered in every conceivable crime of which a government could possibly be guilty.

The more you examine this matter the more you will come to the conclusion which I have arrived at, that this foreign policy, this regard for the "liberties of Europe," this care at one time for "the Protestant interests," this excessive love for "the balance of power," is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain. [Great laughter.] I observe that you receive that declaration as if it were some new and important discovery. In 1815, when the great war with France was ended, every Liberal in England, whose politics, whose hopes, and whose faith had not been crushed out of him by the tyranny of the time of that war, was fully aware of this, and openly admitted it, and up to 1832, and for some years afterward, it was the fixed and undoubted creed of the great Liberal party. But somehow all is changed. We, who stand upon the old landmarks, who walk in the old paths, who would conserve what is wise and prudent, are hustled and shoved about as if we were come to turn the world upside down. The change which has taken place seems to

confirm the opinion of a lamented friend of mine, who, not having succeeded in all his hopes, thought that men made no progress whatever, but went round and round like a squirrel in a cage. The idea is now so general that it is our duty to meddle everywhere, that it really seems as if we had pushed the Tories from the field, expelling them by our competition.

I confess that as a citizen of this country, wishing to live peaceably among my fellow countrymen, and wishing to see my countrymen free, and able to enjoy the fruits of their labor, I protest against a system which binds us in all these networks and complications from which it is impossible that one can gain one single atom of advantage for this country. It is not all glory after all. Glory may be worth something, but it is not always glory. We have had within the last few years despatches from Vienna and from St. Petersburg, which, if we had not deserved them, would have been very offensive and not a little insolent. We have had the ambassador of the Queen expelled summarily from Madrid, and we have had an ambassador driven almost with ignominy from Washington.[1] We have blockaded Athens for a claim which was known to be false. We have quarreled with Naples, for we chose to give advice to Naples,

[1] Two years before the date of this speech (in 1856) the recall of the British minister to Washington had been requested, on the ground that he was promoting the enlistment of troops in the United States for the Crimean War.

which was not received in the submissive spirit expected from her, and our minister was therefore withdrawn. Not three years ago, too, we seized a considerable kingdom in India,[1] with which our government had but recently entered into the most solemn treaty, which every lawyer in England and in Europe, I believe, would consider binding before God and the world. We deposed its monarch; we committed a great immorality and a great crime, and we have reaped an almost instantaneous retribution in the most gigantic and sanguinary revolt which probably any nation ever made against its conquerors.

Within the last few years we have had two wars[2] with a great empire, which we are told contains at least one-third of the whole human race. The first war was called, and appropriately called, the Opium War. No man, I believe, with a spark of morality in his composition, no man who cares anything for the opinion of his fellow countrymen, has dared to justify that war. The war which has just been concluded, if it has been concluded, had its origin in the first war; for the enormities committed in the first war are the foundation of the implacable hostility which it is said the inhabitants of Canton bear to all persons connected with the English name. Yet, tho we have these troubles in India—a vast country which we do not know how to govern,

[1] The annexation of Oudh, February 7, 1856.

[2] The Opium War of 1839 and the Lorcha Arrow War of 1856, both with the Chinese.

and a war with China—a country with which, tho everybody else can remain at peace, we can not, such is the inveterate habit of conquest, such is the insatiable lust of territory, such is, in my view, the depraved, unhappy state of opinion of the country on this subject, that there are not a few persons, chambers of commerce, to-wit, in different parts of the kingdom (tho I am glad to say it has not been so with the chamber of commerce at Birmingham), who have been urging our government to take possession of a province of the greatest island in the Eastern seas; a possession which must at once necessitate increased estimates and increased taxation, and which would probably lead us into merciless and disgraceful wars with the half-savage tribes who inhabit that island.[1]

Since the "Glorious Revolution," since the enthronization of the great Norman territorial families, they have spent in wars, and we have worked for, about 2,000,000,000*l.* The interest on that is 100,000,000*l.* per annum, which alone, to say nothing of the principal sum, is three or four times as much as the whole amount of your annual export trade from that time to this.

Therefore, if war has provided you with a trade, it has been at an enormous cost; but I think it is by no means doubtful that your trade

[1] Out of this agitation had proceeded the treaty of "peace, friendship, and commerce," negotiated with Japan by Lord Elgin in August, 1858.

would have been no less in amount and no less profitable, had peace and justice been inscribed on your flag instead of conquest and the love of military renown. But even in this year, 1858—we have got a long way into the century—we find that within the last seven years our public debt has greatly increased. Whatever be the increase of our population, of our machinery, of our industry, of our wealth, still our national debt goes on increasing. Altho we have not a foot more territory to conserve, or an enemy in the world who dreams of attacking us, we find that our annual military expenses during the last twenty years have risen from 12,000,000*l.* to 22,000,000*l.*

Nothing can by any possibility tend more to the corruption of a government than enormous revenues. We have heard lately of instances of certain joint-stock institutions with very great capital collapsing suddenly, bringing disgrace upon their managers and ruin upon hundreds of families. A great deal of that has arisen, not so much from intentional fraud as from the fact that weak and incapable men have found themselves tumbling about in an ocean of bank-notes and gold, and they appear to have lost all sight of where it came from, to whom it belonged, and whether it was possible by any maladministration ever to come to an end of it. That is what is done by governments.

I think the expenditure of these vast sums, and especially of those which we spend for

military purposes, leads us to adopt a defiant and insolent tone toward foreign countries. We have the freest press in Europe, and the freest platform in Europe, but every man who writes an article in a newspaper, and every man who stands on a platform, ought to do it under a solemn sense of responsibility. Every word he writes, every word I utter, passes with a rapidity of which our forefathers were utterly ignorant, to the very ends of the earth; the words become things and acts, and they produce on the minds of other nations effects which a man may never have intended.

Take a recent case; take the case of France. I am not expected to defend, and I shall certainly not attack, the present government of France.

The instant that it appeared in its present shape the minister of England conducting your foreign affairs, speaking ostensibly for the cabinet, for his sovereign, and for the English nation, offered his congratulations, and the support of England was at once accorded to the recreated French Empire. Soon after this an intimate alliance was entered into between the queen of England, through her ministers, and the emperor of the French.

I am not about to defend the policy which flowed from that alliance, nor shall I take up your time by making any attack upon it. An alliance was entered into and a war was entered into.[1] English and French soldiers fought on

[1] In the Crimea.

the same field, and they suffered, I fear, from the same neglect. They now lie buried on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and except by their mothers, who do not soon forget their children, I suppose they are mostly forgotten. I have never heard it suggested that the French government did not behave with the most perfect honor to this government and to this country all through these grave transactions; but I have heard it stated by those who must know, that nothing could be more honorable, nothing more just, than the conduct of the French emperor to this government throughout the whole of that struggle. More recently, when the war in China was begun by a government which I have condemned and denounced in the House of Commons, the emperor of the French sent his ships and troops to cooperate with us, but I never heard that anything was done there to create a suspicion of a feeling of hostility on his part toward us. The emperor of the French came to London, and some of those powerful organs of the Press that have since taken the line of which I am complaining, did all but invite the people of London to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the chariot which conveyed along our streets the revived monarchy of France. The queen of England went to Paris, and was she not received there with as much affection and as much respect as her high position and her honorable character entitled her to?

What has occurred since? If there was a

momentary unpleasantness, I am quite sure every impartial man will agree that, under the peculiarly irritating circumstances of the time there was at least as much forbearance shown on one side of the Channel as on the other. Then we have had much said lately about a naval fortification recently completed in France, which has been more than one hundred years in progress, and which was not devised by the present emperor of the French.

For one hundred years great sums had been spent on it, and at last, like every other great work, it was brought to an end. The English queen and others were invited over, and many went who were not invited. And yet in all this we are told that there is something to create extreme alarm and suspicion. We, who never fortified any places; we, who have not a greater than Sebastopol at Gibraltar; we who have not an impregnable fortress at Malta, who have not spent the fortune of a nation almost in the Ionian Islands, and who are doing nothing at Alderney—we are to take offense at the fortifications of Cherbourg!

I should like to-night, if I could, to inaugurate one of the best and holiest revolutions that ever took place in this country. We have had a dozen revolutions since some of us were children. We have had one revolution in which you had a great share—a great revolution of opinion on the question of the suffrage. Does it not read like madness that men, thirty years ago, were

frantic at the idea of the people of Birmingham having a £10 franchise? Does it not seem something like idiocy to be told that a banker in Leeds, when it was proposed to transfer the seats of one rotten borough to the town of Leeds, should say (and it was repeated in the House of Commons on his authority) that if the people of Leeds had the franchise conferred upon them it would not be possible to keep the bank doors open with safety, and that he should remove his business to some quiet place, out of the danger from the savage race that peopled that town? But now all confess that the people are perfectly competent to have votes, and nobody dreams of arguing that the privilege will make them less orderly.

Take also the question of protection. Not thirty years ago, but twelve years ago, there was a great party in Parliament, led by the duke in one House, and by a son and brother of a duke in the other, which declared that utter ruin must come, not only on the agricultural interest, but upon the manufactures and commerce of England, if we departed from our old theories upon this subject of protection. They told us that the laborer—the unhappy laborer—of whom it may be said in this country:

> "Here landless laborers hopeless toil and strive,
> But taste no portion of the sweets they hive."

that the laborer was to be ruined; that is, that the paupers were to be pauperized. These

gentlemen were overthrown. The plain, honest, common sense of the country swept away their cobweb theories, and they are gone. What is the result? From 1846 to 1857 we have received into this country of grain of all kinds, including flour, maize, or India corn—all objects heretofore not of absolute prohibition, but which were intended to be prohibited until it was not safe for people to be starved any more—not less than an amount equal in value to 224,000,000*l*. That is equal to 18,700,000*l*. per annum on the average of twelve years. During that period, too, your home growth has been stimulated to an enormous extent. You have imported annually 200,000 tons of guano, and the result has been a proportionate increase in the productions of the soil, for 200,000 tons of guano will grow an equal weight and value of wheat. With all this, agriculture was never more prosperous, while manufactures were never, at the same time, more extensively exported; and with all this, the laborers, for whom the tears of the Protectionist were shed, have, according to the admission of the most violent of the class, never been in a better state since the beginning of the great French war.

It is for you to decide whether our greatness shall be only temporary, or whether it shall be enduring. When I am told that the greatness of our country is shown by the 100,000,000*l*. of revenue produced, may I not also ask how it is that we have 1,100,000 paupers in this kingdom,

and why it is that 7,000,000*l*. should be taken from the industry chiefly of the laboring classes to support a small nation, as it were, of paupers? Since your legislation upon the Corn Laws, you have not only had nearly 20,000,000*l*. of food brought into the country annually, but such an extraordinary increase of trade that your exports are about doubled, and yet I understand that in the year 1856, for I have no later return, there were no less than 1,100,000 paupers in the United Kingdom, and the sum raised in poor-rates was not less than 7,200,000*l*. And that cost of pauperism is not the full amount, for there is a vast amount of temporary, casual, and vagrant pauperism that does not come in to swell that sum.

Then do not you well know—I know it, because I live among the population of Lancashire, and I doubt not the same may be said of the population of this city and county—that just above the level of the 1,100,000 there is at least an equal number who are ever oscillating between independence and pauperism; who, with a heroism which is not the less heroic because it is secret and unrecorded, are doing their very utmost to maintain an honorable and independent position before their fellow men?

While Irish labor, notwithstanding the improvement which has taken place in Ireland, is only paid at the rate of about one shilling a day; while in the straths and glens of Scotland there are hundreds of shepherd families whose

whole food almost consists of oatmeal porridge from day to day, and from week to week; while these things continue, I say that we have no reason to be self-satisfied and contented with our position; but that we who are in Parliament and are more directly responsible for affairs, and you who are also responsible, tho in a lesser degree, are bound by the sacred duty which we owe our country to examine why it is that with all this trade, all this industry, and all this personal freedom, there is still so much that is unsound at the base of our social fabric?

Let me direct your attention now to another point which I never think of without feelings that words would altogether fail to express. You hear constantly that woman, the helpmate of man, who adorns, dignifies, and blesses our lives, that woman in this country is cheap; that vast numbers whose names ought to be synonyms for purity and virtue, are plunged into profligacy and infamy. But do you not know that you sent 40,000 men to perish on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and that the revolt in India, caused, in part at least, by the grievous iniquity of the seizure of Oude, may tax your country to the extent of 100,000 lives before it is extinguished; and do you not know that for the 140,000 men thus drafted off and consigned to premature graves, nature provided in your country 140,000 women? If you have taken the men who should have been the husbands of these women, and if you have sacrificed 100,-

000,000*l.*, which as capital reserved in the country would have been an ample fund for their employment and for the sustentation of their families, are you not guilty of a great sin in involving yourselves in such a loss of life and of money in war, except on grounds and under circumstances which, according to the opinions of every man in the country, should leave no kind of option whatever for your choice?

I believe there is no permanent greatness to a nation except it be based upon morality. I do not care for military greatness or military renown. I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. There is no man in England who is less likely to speak irreverently of the crown and monarchy of England than I am; but crowns, coronets, miters, military display, the pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire are, in my view, all trifles, light as air, and not worth considering, unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, stately mansions, do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage; and unless the light of your constitution can shine there, unless the beauty of your legislation and the excellence of your statesmanship are impressed there on the feelings and condition of the people, rely upon it, you have yet to learn the duties of government.

The most ancient of profane historians has

told us that the Scythians of his time were a very warlike people, and that they elevated an old cimeter upon a platform as a symbol of Mars, for to Mars alone, I believe, they built altars and offered sacrifices. To this cimeter they offered sacrifices of horses and cattle, the main wealth of the country, and more costly sacrifices than to all the rest of their gods. I often ask myself whether we are at all advanced in one respect beyond those Scythians. What are our contributions to charity, to education, to morality, to religion, to justice, and to civil government, when compared with the wealth we expend in sacrifices to the old cimeter?

Two nights ago I addressed in this hall a vast assembly composed to a great extent of your countrymen who have no political power, who are at work from the dawn of the day to the evening, and who have therefore limited means of informing themselves on these great subjects. Now I am privileged to speak to a somewhat different audience. You represent those of your great community who have a more complete education, who have on some points greater intelligence, and in whose hands reside the power and influence of the district. I am speaking, too, within the hearing of those whose gentle nature, whose finer instincts, whose purer minds, have not suffered as some of us have suffered in the turmoil and strife of life. You can mold opinion, you can create political power; you can not think a good thought on this subject

and communicate it to your neighbors,—you can not make these points topics of discussion in your social circles and more general meetings, without affecting sensibly and speedily the course which the government of your country will pursue.

May I ask you, then, to believe, as I do most devoutly believe, that the moral law was not written for men alone in their individual character, but that it was written as well for nations, and for nations great as this of which we are citizens. If nations reject and deride that moral law, there is a penalty which will inevitably follow. It may not come at once, it may not come in our lifetime; but rely upon it, the great Italian is not a poet only, but a prophet, when he says:

> "The sword of heaven is not in haste to smite,
> Nor yet doth linger."

We have experience, we have beacons, we have landmarks enough. We know what the past has cost us; we know how much and how far we have wandered, but we are not left without a guide. It is true we have not, as an ancient people had, Urim and Thummim—those oraculous gems on Aaron's breast—from which to take counsel, but we have the unchangeable and eternal principles of the moral law to guide us, and only so far as we walk by that guidance can we be permanently a great nation, or our people a happy people.

II

ON THE "TRENT" AFFAIR[1]

(1861)

Two years ago we looked south, to the plains of Lombardy, and saw a great strife there, in which every man in England took a strong interest; and we have welcomed, as the result of that strife, the addition of a great kingdom to the list of European states. Now our eyes are turned in a contrary direction, and we look to the west. There we see a struggle in progress of the very highest interest to England and to humanity at large. We see there a nation which I shall call the transatlantic English nation—the inheritor and partaker of all the historic glories of this country. We see it torn with intestine broils, and suffering from calamities from which for more than a century past—in fact, for more than two centuries past—this country has been exempt. That struggle is of especial interest to us. We remember the description which one of our great poets gives of Rome—

"Lone mother of dead empires."

But England is the living mother of great

[1] Delivered at a banquet in Rochdale, December 4, 1861, and recognized at the time as having stemmed the tide of exasperation which had set in among the English over what is known as the "Trent" Affair. This affair was the forcible seizure (on board the English vessel *Trent*) in the Bahama channel November 8, 1861, of the Con-

nations on the American and on the Australian continents, which promise to endow the world with all her knowledge and all her civilization, and with even something more than the freedom she herself enjoys.

Eighty-five years ago, at the time when some of our oldest townsmen were very little children, there were, on the North American continent, colonies, mainly of Englishmen, containing about three millions of souls. These colonies we have seen a year ago constituting the United States of North America, and comprising a population of no less than thirty millions of souls. We know that in agriculture and manufactures, with the exception of this kingdom, there is no country in the world which in these arts may be placed in advance of the United States. With regard to inventions, I believe, within the last thirty years, we have received more useful inventions from the United States than from all the other countries of the earth. In that country there are probably ten times as many miles of telegraph as there are in this country, and there are at least five or six times as many miles of railway. The tonnage of its shipping is at least equal to ours, if it does not exceed ours. The prisons of that country—for, even in countries the most favored, prisons are needful—

federate commissioners to Europe, Mason and Slidell, by a United States captain named Wilkes. Serious international complications were prevented only by a disavowal of Wilkes's act by the United States government. Abridged.

have been models for other nations of the earth; and many European governments have sent missions at different times to inquire into the admirable system of education so universally adopted in their free schools throughout the Northern States.

If I were to speak of that country in a religious aspect, I should say that, considering the short space of time to which their history goes back, there is nothing on the face of the earth besides, and never has been, to equal the magnificent arrangement of churches and ministers, and of all the appliances which are thought necessary for a nation to teach Christianity and morality to its people. Besides all this, when I state that, for many years past, the annual public expenditure of the government of that country has been somewhere between 10,000,000*l.* and 15,000,000*l.*, I need not perhaps say further that there has always existed among all the population an amount of comfort and prosperity and abounding plenty such as I believe no other country in the world, in any age, has enjoyed.

This is a very fine, but a very true picture; yet it has another side to which I must advert. There has been one great feature in that country, one great contrast, which has been pointed to by all who have commented upon the United States as a feature of danger, as a contrast calculated to give pain. There has been in that country the utmost liberty to the white man, and bondage and degradation to the black man.

Now rely upon it, that wherever Christianity lives and flourishes, there must grow up from it, necessarily, a conscience hostile to any oppression and to any wrong; and therefore, from the hour when the United States Constitution was formed, so long as it left there this great evil—then comparatively small, but now so great—it left there seeds of that which an American statesman has so happily described of that "irrepressible conflict" of which now the whole world is the witness. It has been a common thing for men disposed to carp at the United States to point to this blot upon their fair fame, and to compare it with the boasted declaration of freedom in their Deed and Declaration of Independence.

Well, the United States Constitution left the slave question for every State to manage for itself. It was a question too difficult to settle then, and apparently every man had the hope and belief that in a few years slavery itself would become extinct. Then there happened a great event in the annals of manufactures and commerce. It was discovered that in those States that article which we in this country now so much depend on, could be produced of the best quality necessary for manufacture, and at a moderate price. From that day to this the growth of cotton has increased there, and its consumption has increased here, and a value which no man dreamed of has been given to the slave and to slave industry. Thus it has grown

up to that gigantic institution which now threatens either its own overthrow or the overthrow of that which is a million times more valuable—the United States of America.

The crisis at which we have arrived—I say "we," for, after all, we are nearly as much interested as if I was making this speech in the city of Boston or the city of New York—the crisis, I say, which has now arrived, was inevitable. I say that the conscience of the North, never satisfied with the institution of slavery, was constantly urging some men forward to take a more extreme view of the question; and there grew up naturally a section—it may not have been a very numerous one—in favor of the abolition of slavery. A great and powerful party resolved at least upon a restraint and a control of slavery, so that it should not extend beyond the States and the area which it now occupies. But, if we look at the government of the United States almost ever since the formation of the Union, we shall find the Southern power has been mostly dominant there. If we take thirty-six years after the formation of the present Constitution—I think about 1787—we shall find that for thirty-two of those years every president was a Southern man; and if we take the period from 1828 until 1860, we shall find that, on every election for president, the South voted in the majority.

Last year the ceremony of this great election was gone through, and the South, which had been

so long successful, found itself defeated. That defeat was followed instantly by secession, and insurrection, and war. In the multitude of articles which have been before us in the newspapers within the last few months, I have no doubt you have seen it stated, as I have seen it, that this question was very much like that upon which the Colonies originally revolted against the crown of England. It is amazing how little some newspaper writers know, or how little they think you know. When the War of Independence was begun in America, ninety years ago, there were no representatives there at all. The question then was, whether a ministry in Downing Street, and a corrupt and borough-mongering parliament, should continue to impose taxes upon three millions of English subjects who had left their native shores and established themselves in North America. But now the question is not the want of representation, because, as is perfectly notorious, the South is not only represented, but is represented in excess; for, in distributing the number of representatives which is done every ten years, three out of every five slaves are counted as freemen, and the number of representatives from the slave States is consequently so much greater than if the freemen, the white men only, were counted. From this cause the Southern States have twenty members more in the House of Representatives than they would have if the members were apportioned on the same principle

as in the Northern free States. Therefore you will see at once that there is no comparison between the state of things when the Colonies revolted, and the state of things now, when this wicked insurrection has broken out.

I will not discuss the guilt of the men who, ministers of a great nation only last year, conspired to overthrow it. I will not point out or recapitulate the statements of the fraudulent manner in which they disposed of the funds in the national exchequer. I will not point out by name any of the men, in this conspiracy, whom history will designate by titles they would not like to hear; but I say that slavery has sought to break up the most free government in the world, and to found a new State, in the nineteenth century, whose corner-stone is the perpetual bondage of millions of men.

Having thus described what appears to me briefly the literal truth of this matter, what is the course that England would be expected to pursue? We should be neutral as far as regards the mingling in the strife. We were neutral in the strife in Italy, but we were not neutral in opinion or sympathy; and we know perfectly well that throughout the whole of Italy at this moment there is a feeling that, tho no shot was fired from an English ship, and tho no English soldier trod their soil, yet still the opinion of England was potent in Europe, and did much for the creation of the Italian kingdom.

With regard to the United States, you know

how much we hate slavery—that is, some years ago we thought we knew; that we have given twenty millions sterling—a million a year, or nearly so, of taxes for ever—to free eight hundred thousand slaves in the English colonies. We knew, or thought we knew, how much we were in love with free government everywhere, altho it might not take precisely the same form as our government. We were for free government in Italy; we were for free government in Switzerland; and we were for free government, even under a republican form, in the United States of America; and with all this, every man would have said that England would wish the American Union to be prosperous and eternal.

Now, suppose we turn our eyes to the East, to the empire of Russia, for a moment. In Russia, as you all know, there has been one of the most important and magnificent changes of policy ever seen in any country. Within the last year or two, the present emperor of Russia, following the wishes of his father, has insisted upon the abolition of serfdom in that empire; and twenty-three millions of human beings, lately serfs, little better than real slaves, have been raised to the ranks of freedom. Now, suppose that the millions of the serfs of Russia had been chiefly in the south of Russia. We hear of the nobles of Russia, to whom those serfs belonged in a great measure, that they have been hostile to this change; and there has been some danger that the peace of that empire might be disturbed

during the change. Suppose these nobles, for the purpose of maintaining in perpetuity the serfdom of Russia, and barring out twenty-three millions of your fellow creatures from the rights of freedom, had established a great and secret conspiracy, and that they had risen in great and dangerous insurrection against the Russian government—I say that you, the people of England, altho seven years ago you were in mortal combat with the Russians in the south of Europe—I believe at this moment you would have prayed Heaven in all sincerity and fervor to give strength to the arms and success to the great wishes of the emperor, and that the vile and atrocious insurrection might be suppressed.

I want to know whether it has ever been admitted by politicians, or statesmen, or the people, that a great nation can be broken up at any time by any particular section of any part of that nation. It has been tried occasionally in Ireland, and if it had succeeded history would have said that it was with very good cause. But if anybody tried now to get up a secession or insurrection in Ireland—and it would be infinitely less disturbing to everything than the secession in the United States, because there is a boundary which nobody can dispute—I am quite sure that the *Times* would have its "special correspondent," and would describe with all glee and exultation in the world the manner in which the Irish insurrectionists were cut down and made an end of.

Let any man try in this country to restore the heptarchy, do you think that any portion of the people would think that the project could be tolerated for a moment? But if you look at a map of the United States, you will see that there is no country in the world, probably, at this moment, where any plan of separation between the North and the South, as far as the question of boundary is concerned, is so surmounted with insurmountable difficulties. For example, Maryland is a slave State; but Maryland, by a large majority, voted for the Union. Kentucky is a slave State, one of the finest in the Union, and containing a fine people; Kentucky has voted for the Union, but has been invaded from the South. Missouri is a slave State; but Missouri has not seceded, and has been invaded by the South, and there is a secession party in that State. There are parts of Virginia which have formed themselves into a new State, resolved to adhere to the North; and there is no doubt a considerable Northern and Union feeling in the State of Tennessee. I have no doubt there is in every other State. In fact, I am not sure that there is not now within the sound of my voice a citizen of the State of Alabama, who could tell you that in his State the question of secession has never been put to the vote; and that there are great numbers of men, reasonable and thoughtful and just men, in that State, who entirely deplore the condition of things there existing.

Then, what would you do with all those States, and with what we may call the loyal portion of the people of those States? Would you allow them to be dragooned into this insurrection, and into the formation or the becoming parts of a new State, to which they themselves are hostile? And what would you do with the City of Washington? Washington is a slave State. Would anybody have advised that President Lincoln and his cabinet, with all the members of Congress, of the House of Representatives and the Senate, from the North, with their wives and children, and everybody else who was not positively in favor of the South, should have set off on their melancholy pilgrimage northward, leaving that capital, hallowed to them by such associations—having its name even from the father of their country—leaving Washington to the South, because Washington is situated in a slave State?

There is one more point. It has been said, "How much better it would be"—not for the United States, but—"for us, that these States should be divided." I recollect meeting a gentleman in Bond Street one day before the session was over. He was a rich man, and one whose voice is much heard in the House of Commons; but his voice is not heard when he is on his legs, but when he is cheering other speakers; and he said to me: "After all, this is a sad business about the United States; but still I think it very much better that they should be split up. In

twenty years"—or in fifty years, I forget which it was—"they will be so powerful that they will bully all Europe." And a distinguished member of the House of Commons—distinguished there by his eloquence, distinguished more by his many writings—I mean Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton—he did not exactly express a hope, but he ventured on something like a prediction, that the time would come when there would be, I do not know how many, but about as many independent States on the American continent as you can count upon your fingers.

There can not be a meaner motive than this I am speaking of, in forming a judgment on this question: that it is "better for us"—for whom? the people of England, or the government of England?—that the United States should be severed, and that the North American continent should be as the continent of Europe is in many States, and subject to all the contentions and disasters which have accompanied the history of the states of Europe. I should say that, if a man had a great heart within him, he would rather look forward to the day, when, from that point of land which is habitable nearest to the Pole, to the shores of the Great Gulf, the whole of that vast continent might become one great confederation of States—without a great army, and without a great navy—not mixing itself up with the entanglements of European politics—without a custom house inside, through the whole length and breadth of its territory—and

with freedom everywhere, equality everywhere, law everywhere, peace everywhere; such a confederation would afford at least some hope that man is not forsaken of Heaven, and that the future of our race may be better than the past.

Now I am obliged to say—and I say it with the utmost pain—that if we have not done things that are plainly hostile to the North, and if we have not expressed affection for slavery, and, outwardly and openly, hatred for the Union—I say that there has not been that friendly and cordial neutrality, which, if I had been a citizen of the United States, I should have expected; and I say further, that, if there has existed considerable irritation at that, it must be taken as a measure of the high appreciation which the people of those States place upon the opinion of the people of England.

But there has occurred an event which was announced to us only a week ago, which is one of great importance, and it may be one of some peril. It is asserted that what is called "international law" has been broken by the seizure of the Southern commissioners on board an English trading steamer by a steamer of war of the United States. Now, what is international law? You have heard that the opinions of the law officers of the crown are in favor of this view of the case—that the law has been broken. I am not at all going to say that it has not. It would be imprudent in me to set my opinion on a legal question which I have only partially examined,

against their opinion on the same question, which I presume they have carefully examined. But this I say, that international law is not to be found in an act of Parliament—it is not in so many clauses. You know that it is difficult to find the law. I can ask the mayor, or any magistrate around me, whether it is not very difficult to find the law, even when you have found the Act of Parliament, and found the clause. But when you have no Act of Parliament, and no clause, you may imagine that the case is still more difficult.

Now, maritime law, or international law, consists of opinions and precedents for the most part, and it is very unsettled. The opinions are the opinions of men of different countries, given at different times; and the precedents are not always like each other. The law is very unsettled, and, for the most part, I believe it to be exceedingly bad. In past times, as you know from the histories you read, this country has been a fighting country; we have been belligerents, and as belligerents, we have carried maritime law by your own powerful hand, to a pitch that has been very oppressive to foreign, and especially so to neutral, nations. Well, now, for the first time, unhappily—almost for the first time in our history for the last two hundred years—we are not belligerents, but neutrals; and we are disposed to take, perhaps, rather a different view of maritime and international law.

Now, the act which has been committed by

the American steamer, in my opinion, whether it was legal or not, was both impolitic and bad. That is my opinion. I think it may turn out, almost certainly, that, so far as the taking of those men from that ship was concerned, it was an act wholly unknown to, and unauthorized by, the American government. And if the American government believe, on the opinion of their law officers, that the act is illegal, I have no doubt they will make fitting reparation; for there is no government in the world that has so strenuously insisted upon modifications of international law, and been so anxious to be guided always by the most moderate and merciful interpretation of that law.

Now, our great advisers of the *Times* newspaper have been persuading people that this is merely one of a series of acts which denote the determination of the Washington government to pick a quarrel with the people of England. Did you ever know anybody who was not very nearly dead drunk, who, having as much upon his hands as he could manage, would offer to fight everybody about him? Do you believe that the United States government, presided over by President Lincoln, so constitutional in all his acts, so moderate as he has been—representing at this moment that great party in the United States, happily now in the ascendency, which has always been especially in favor of peace, and especially friendly to England—do you believe that such a government, having now upon its

hands an insurrection of the most formidable character in the South, would invite the armies and the fleets of England to combine with that insurrection, and, it might be, to render it impossible that the Union should ever again be restored? I say, that single statement, whether it came from a public writer or a public speaker, is enough to stamp him forever with the character of being an insidious enemy of both countries.

What can be more monstrous than that we, as we call ourselves, to some extent, an educated, a moral, and a Christian nation—at a moment when an accident of this kind occurs, before we have made a representation to the American government, before we have heard a word from it in reply—should be all up in arms, every sword leaping from its scabbard, and every man looking about for his pistols and his blunderbusses? I think the conduct pursued—and I have no doubt just the same is pursued by a certain class in America—is much more the conduct of savages than of Christian and civilized men. No, let us be calm. You recollect how we were dragged into the Russian war—how we "drifted" into it. You know that I, at least, have not upon my head any of the guilt of that fearful war. You know that it cost one hundred millions of money to this country; that it cost at least the lives of forty thousand Englishmen; that it disturbed your trade; that it nearly doubled the armies of Europe; that it placed the relations of Europe on a much less peaceful

footing than before; and that it did not effect on single thing of all those that it was promised to effect.

Now, then, before I sit down, let me ask you what is this people, about which so many men in England at this moment are writing, and speaking, and thinking, with harshness, I think with injustice, if not with great bitterness? Two centuries ago, multitudes of the people of this country found a refuge on the North American continent, escaping from the tyranny of the Stuarts and from the bigotry of Laud. Many noble spirits from our country made great experiments in favor of human freedom on that continent. Bancroft, the great historian of his own country, has said, in his own graphic and emphatic language, "The history of the colonization of America is the history of the crimes of Europe."

At this very moment, then, there are millions in the United States who personally, or whose immediate parents have at one time been citizens of this country. They found a home in the Far West; they subdued the wilderness; they met with plenty there, which was not afforded them in their native country; and they have become a great people. There may be persons in England who are jealous of those States. There may be men who dislike democracy, and who hate a republic; there may be even those whose sympathies warm toward the slave oligarchy of the South. But of this I am certain, that only

misrepresentation the most gross, or calumny the most wicked can sever the tie which unites the great mass of the people of this country with their friends and brethren beyond the Atlantic.

Now, whether the Union will be restored or not, or the South achieve an unhonored independence or not, I know not, and I predict not. But this I think I know—that in a few years, a very few years, the twenty millions of freemen in the North will be thirty millions, or even fifty millions—a population equal to or exceeding that of this kingdom. When that time comes, I pray that it may not be said among them, that in the darkest hour of their country's trials, England, the land of their fathers, looked on with icy coldness and saw unmoved the perils and calamities of their children. As for me, I have but this to say: I am but one in this audience, and but one in the citizenship of this country; but if all other tongues are silent, mine shall speak for that policy which gives hope to the bondmen of the South, and which tends to generous thoughts, and generous words, and generous deeds, between the two great nations who speak the English language, and from their origin are alike entitled to the English name.

END OF VOL. IV